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THE

BAPTISM OF INFANTS,

AUTHORIZED BY SCRIPTURE,



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STATES OF BULLYNES

ASSESSMENT OF PROPERTY

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BAPTISM OF INFANTS,

AUTHORIZED BY SCRIPTURE,

A N D

The Practice of the Church of CHRIST

IN EVERY AGE.

IN REPLY

To Mr. BIRT'S PAMPHLET,
ENTITLED,

A Defence of Scripture Baptism.

By HERBERT MENDS.

GO TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM.

MATTHEW.

Qui præcipit omnes gentes Baptizari, is etiam præcipit Baptizari INFANTES, preceptum enim de genere includit omnes species.

TURRETINE.

PLYMOUTH:

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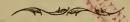
ADVERTISE MENT.

THE long period which has intervened between the publication of the Rev. Mr. BIRT's Pamphlet, and of this Reply, feems, in some degree, to render an apology requisite. This opportunity, therefore, is embraced, to fay, that this Treatife would have made a much earlier appearance, had not a long and painful indisposition rendered me incapable of finishing the work. And after it had been fent to the press, many delays occurred, which could not be avoided. It is, however, at length, with great diffidence, presented to the impartial public.

H. M.

at a second or and

To the Church of Christ, affembling in Batter-Street, Plymouth.



To defend the cause of, what I deem truth—to confirm the religious opinions of those, whose spiritual prosperity lies near my heart—and to guard the minds of the Disciples of Jesus, against those principles which bear so unfavourable an aspect on their privileges, this attempt, to plead the cause of our Infant Offspring, is humbly submitted to your serious and candid attention.

It is designed, more especially, for the benefit of the younger branches of this Church and Congregation: and to whom this Treatise, as a small token of affection and esteem, is most respectfully dedicated,

By your Friend,

And Servant,

In the Gospel of Christ,

HERBERT MENDS.

Plymouth, February 11th, 1797.

ERRATA.

Page 2. Query V. for circumston, read circumciston. Page 4. 23d line from the top, insert the.

Page 10. note, read page 22.

Page 13. 26th line, for mattervale read mathervale.

Page 22. 10th line, for Jesus, read Jews.

Page 26. 20th line, for beitevers, read believers.

Page 28. 28th line, dele of.

THE

BAPTISM of INFANTS, &c.

WITH reluctance I enter the field of controverly. It has been trodden by illustrious characters, who have wielded the weapons with a masterly hand. My reluctance is proportionably increased, as I appear an opponent to one, of whom I have long entertained an high opinion, and in whose friendship I have experienced real satisfaction. But circumstanced as I am, a necessity is laid upon me, to vindicate principles, which I hold facred; and plead the cause of those who cannot speak for themselves, and who are, by many, in the present day, deprived of the privileges of church membership.

With that diffidence, which a consciousness of inability imposes upon me, but, with that boldness, which a perfuasion of being on the side of scripture and of truth, necessarily inspires, I enter on the discussion of this subject.

As I have faid, that I am confirmed to engage in this controverfy; it will be proper to flate the attending circumflances; I shall then cheerfully leave the decision to the candid and impartial public.

Sometime in August last, the following hand bill was given me, by one of the Members of my Church.

"TO ALL THAT LOVE TRUTH AND PEACE.

As union among professed christians is very desirable, and as a difference of sentiment, respecting baptism, is

B one

one cause of division among them; a just Solution of the following Queries is earnestly requested, as it would have a happy tendency to promote christian concord.

Query I. What precept or precedent is there in scrip-

ture for Infant baptism?

Query II. What fpiritual promise is made to the children of believers, more than to the offspring of others? Or, if there be any such promise, what proof does it afford of Infant baptism?

Query III. To what peculiar privilege are children admitted by baptism?

Query IV. Why are not infants admitted to the Lord's

Supper, as well as to baptifm?

Query V. Why, if circuminon was a feal of the covenant of grace, did not Abraham circumcife his near kinfman, the righteous Lot? And why was baptifm administered before circumfion was abolished, and enjoined on those who were circumcifed?

Query VI. Does not the doctrine of Infant baptism consign over to everlasting misery all children that die in their infancy, (except those of believers) while it proceeds on a supposition, that the covenant of circumcission was the covenant of grace; and every infant, dying unbaptized, on the principle of baptismal regeneration?

Query VII. Can it be supposed, without absurdity, that two such different modes of administering the same institution, as dipping and sprinkling manifestly are, should be both agreeable to the law of Christ, in that case made and provided?

Query VIII. Is baptism a prerequisite to the Lord's table? If not, why do not the Pædobaptists admit per-

fons to communion, that are, in their judgment, unbaptized? If it be, why are the Baptists blamed for not admitting those, who, in their judgment, are unbaptized?

A calm discussion, and a scriptural solution of these Queries, are of great importance to the purity of a positive ordinance, and a branch of solemn worship."*

The Person who put this into my hand, informed me, that the Reverend Mr. Birt had circulated it.

Acknowledging the truth of this information, Mr. B. fays,† "Of their Author, I know nothing. At the close of one of our weekly meetings, I gave a few of them to the friends who were present; the rest I gave to three persons who called on me, and asked for them; I do not remember that I gave one to a Pædobaptist. This is the whole I know of, or have done with the questions."

All this is to little purpose, for whether Mr. B. was the author, or not, he became responsible by circulating them. It is little better than trisling, to say, that he does not remember that he gave one to a Padobaptist; for unquestionably, it was Mr. B's intention, that they should find their way into the hands of such, as believed and practised Infant Baptism: if not, to what purpose would it be, "earnessly to request a solution;" and what tendency could it have to "promote Christian concord, and an union among professed Christians," if confined wholly,

† Page 1.

For an Answer to these Queries, addressed "To those who esteem the Essence of Religion of more Importance than the Forms and Ceremonies," Printed by P. Nettleson, Plymouth, and fold by him and J. Heydon, Dock-Price one pemy.

B 2

to that fociety of persons, who were already of one mind on that subject?

This hand-bill, therefore, has been justly considered, as AN OPEN CHALLENGE TO ALL PÆDOBAPTISTS, which, it would have been esteemed cowardly, not to have accepted, and which, filently to have configned to oblivion, might have been considered as a breach of politeness towards our Anabaptist brethren. Thus the advocates for Infant Baptisin, were constrained to detend themselves against an attack, thus illiberally, (and may I not fay infidiously?) made, by the circulation of the haudbill. When, therefore, (agreeably to "earnest request") a reply was made, it was little apprehended, that it would have been construed into an infult-especially an infult offered to the Rev. Mr. B. Little was it expected that Mr. B. would fo far have refented it, as to have been influenced, formally to announce (as he did in a letter of the fifth of September last) his determination to break the bonds of friendship with me. In this letter, he fays, "Last week I should have had the pleasure of visiting you, but was prevented by the appearance of a printed address, "To those who esteem the Essence of Religion, &c." And all this, only because he considered me as the Author of that address!

If it would have been esteemed an unpardonable offence, to have replied to the above questions, it would have been kind and fair, in Mr. B. to have signified it, at the time of circulation; by which, the line of conduct of every Pædobaptist, would have been marked out.

However I may regret the loss of Mr. B's friendship, it is some consolation, that a friendship so easily broken,

could not have been very strongly cemented; and is therefore, the less valuable in proportion to its versatility. Yet I am free to declare, that my esteem for him shall not be shaken; and however severely he may judge of the Author, as willing "if he had it in his power sadly to circumscribe the rights of the Baptists, and act as a rigid dictator"—still, on every occasion, I am free to declare for myself, that my hand and my heart shall be open to him, and to every Minister of Jesus Christ, let his sentiments be what they may, concerning the circumstantials of religion, and modes of worship; for, I never thought, the water controversy of such consequence, as to interrupt, for a moment, the noble feelings of brotherly love.

I appeal to Mr. B. and to every Anti-pædobaptist in the vicinity, that since my residence in this town, my endeavours have been unremitting, to throw down every party-wall of distinction, and to unite all those, who believe the essential truths of Christianity, in the endearing bonds of Christian fellowship. And in the present instance, I am persuaded, that Mr. B. himself must acquit the Author of that Pamphlet of the charge of being the aggressor.

Mr. B.* fays, "that he has descended to personal accusations. This cannot be proved. The reply was evidently made without a knowledge of the Author, and it was addressed to every individual, who might deign to cast an eye on its pages. Highly as I respect Mr. B. I

cast an eye on its pages. Highly as I respect Mr. B. I confess that I did not ('till now) consider him as the re-presentative of the Anabaptists in this part of the king-

dom, fo that no controverfy could be maintained, on the subject of Baptism, without the Author's being chargeable with personally insulting him, and incurring the loss of his friendship. In some, this would be thought an assumption of no small consequence. But a consciousness, will always impart extreme sensibility. To this cause, in part, may be attributed that great irritability discovered through every part of Mr. B's Pamphlet, and the Reader will see, with how much truth he can say, "that he cannot dare to return" those severe expressions, which he supposes are used towards him. But this irritability, may be also easily accounted for, as nothing can more effectually rouse the Baptists than to detect them, in attempting to unsettle the minds of the young, and serious members of other churches.

That this charge is not groundless, I appeal to the state of the Anti-pædobaptist churches in general. Are they not chiefly composed of persons who received their first ferious impressions under the ministry of Pædobaptists? and who once were in communion with our churches?

Mr. B.+ kindles into a flame at the bare mention of this, and fays, "If what is suggested at the close of the Pamphlet be designed for me, I declare it to be a groundless calumny, and call upon him to cast off his veil, and exhibit proof of his unworthy infinuations." I see no just cause for all this warmth. I will give it as my opinion, that the Author of that Address, did not design, what he said on that subject, for Mr. B. in particular; and that there was no more occasion, for Mr. B's application of it to himself, than to any other Anabaptist in

the County. This extreme fensibility however may lead fome to suspect, that all was not right.

However angry Mr. B. may be, and however unworthy and groundless, he may deem the infinuations, I am convinced, from many years experience and observation, that the generality of the Ministers and People of that denomination, in this inflance, act ungenerously. They infinuate themselves into the affections of Pædobaptist congregations, and embrace every opportunity of unfettling the minds of the young and unguarded, on the subject of Baptism, by lending them books, and puzzling them with certain questions. To such a length is this conduct carried by fome, that an Author lately afferted, that three-fourths of the members in some Baptist churches, have been thus drawn from other focieties. If they fee a person under serious impressions, or struggling with doubts of his interest in the love of Christ, they fay, "Friend, your darkness and distress may easily be accounted for-you live in the neglect of one of the politive commands of God; and how can you reasonably expect that the Lord will shine on your soul, and give you peace and joy in the Holy Ghost?" The diftressed person (his mind awake to every thing that may encourage his hopes, or his fears) is alarmed, and eagerly asks, "Pray, Sir, tell me what command is this to which you allude? as far as I know myfelf, I would do any thing; I would comply with every injunction of my Lord." They readily reply, "You have never been buried with Christ in Baptism: You have not complied with the COMMAND, and the EXAMPLE, of Christ and his Apostles. As for your Infant Baptism, it was not

your act, neither may children claim, nor are they fit fubjects for that folemn institution." This staggers his belief—and as every one, under his first impressions, is strongly influenced by legal principles, he immediately submits to be dipped, in expectation of rising out of the water, fully assured of his interest in Christ.

This is not a cafe which exists in imagination only it has more than once come within my own knowledge; and, I believe, a multitude of Pædobaptist Ministers in this kingdom, can confirm the truth of this representation. It is ungenerous. Were Baptism in adult age, and Baptism by immersion, necessary to the salvation of the foul, they would be justified in laying aside all ceremony, and adopting every method to awaken and undeceive. But as the Baptists themselves pretend not to asfert this abfurdity, (as on all hands it is allowed to be a mere circumstantial) I say again, it is ungenerous.-Therefore I adopt the fentiment and language of that Author, against whom Mr. B. is so exceedingly incenfed. "It is far more becoming every disciple of the amiable Jesus, to behold with heart-felt pleasure (instead of attempting to break) the peace of a Christian fociety, for no other reason, than because that society has not feen it necessary to be plunged. That time which is spent in useless, injurious controverses, in compassing sea and land to make proselytes, and enticing the sheep of one fold to forsake their companions, and enter another, would be better employed in ferious endeavours to rescue sinners from the power of Satan .-Such conduct would be more honourable to themselves, and more beneficial to their fellow-mortals.

Before I enter on the discussion of the subject in debate, I shall beg leave to lay before the Reader, a sew preliminary remarks on Mr. B's pamphlet.

. 1st. Mifrepresentation is no proof of the strength of an argument.-And I appeal to the judgment of every impartial Reader, whether Mr. B. has not mifrepresented, the plain and obvious meaning of the Author of that pamphlet, whose words are these. + "Is the mere ritethe mode of Baptism-the quantity of water of such confequence? Does it enter so effentially into the nature of a Christian ordinance? The everlasting falvation of the foul, and the cultivation of the graces of the Spirit, are of greater consequence than the mere MODE of Baptism." Now, with what appearance of justice can he ask, as he does in a note, \(\cdot ' \) Is it consistent to represent Bapti/m, in one place, as a mere form," and in another to fay, "God has made it a prerequifite for admission into the Kingdom of Grace." Or is it candid, to endeavour to persuade the Reader, that the Author considered Baptism, as a mere rite, a mere form and ceremony, as he does? All his pathetic exclamations, and warm eulogia, on the divine authority, and vast importance of Baptism, vanish into air, as they apply not, in the smallest degree, to what the Author meant, and what every man of common fense, must know that he meant, when he used the terms, a mere form, rite, &c .-He must know, that they applied wholly, and exclusively, to the MODE of administration, and to the quantity of water used, and not to the effence of Baptism.

I most cheerfully subscribe to the following fentiments:

+ Page 1 and 8. § Page 22. ‡ Pages 22 and 23. C "That

"That Baptism is a part of gospel worship, and therefore comes to us, not only with divine authority, but also fraught with all-important, and most instructive truth." But will any Anti-pædobaptist affert all this, of the mode of administration, or the quantity of the water used in that ordinance? Are not these circumstantials, entirely ab extra, which may be used, or not used, according to the opinion of the persons engaged? Is the posture of the body in the act of prayer, or receiving the Lord's supper, an essential part of those important duties?

Let the matter be thus rightly stated, and the Author permitted to speak for himself, and he will not be asraid, again to affert, (however irreverent it may be deemed) that the MODE of administering the ordinance of Baptism, whether by dipping, or sprinkling, or pouring water, is a mere rite, form, and ceremony, and does not enter into the essence of that ordinance.

andly. Mr. B. finds fault with the expression, that "God has made Baptism, a prerequisite for admission into the Kingdom of Grace.† And I ask, is it not? Did not John and Philip, enforce Baptism, as necessary to admission into the gospel dispensation, frequently called the Kingdom of God? If Mr. B. does not consider it, in this light, why does he resuse admission to the Lord's table, to those, who, (in his judgment) have not been baptized? But, I confess, herein we look for consistency of conduct in vain, among the Anabaptists; for while one Church resuses such as have been baptized in their infancy, but not in adult age, another will readily receive them; herein most affuredly bearing teltimony, to the

validity of Infant Baptism. But these more liberal Baptists, seem to be conscious of the apparent impropriety of this conduct, and labour, as soon as possible, to persuade these Pæslobaptists to go under water. Thus they openly become Anabaptists, (that is to say) advocates for RE-baptism, or lie open to the charge, of admitting UNbaptized persons into church fellowship. We cheerfully leave them to chuse which alternative they please.

3rdly. The fentiment of Tertullian, adopted by Mr. B. as his motto, and made his own,* is highly objectionable. "THE SCRIPTURE FORBIDS, WHAT IT DOES NOT MENTION." It is a fentiment, which ought to be the last adopted by an Anti-pædobaptist, whose whole fystem depends on analogical reasoning, and inferences drawn from fcripture premifes, and fcripture filence .--No fentiment can be more unfortunate than this, when applied to the subject in debate. It proves too muchmuch more, than the advocates for dipping would wish; as for instance; the scripture does not mention, that the fubject should go UNDER water, therefore it forbids it: The scripture does not mention, that the cloaths should be baptized, therefore it forbids it; The scripture does not mention, that women should receive the Lord's supper, therefore it forbids it: The scripture does not mention, that the ordinance of the Lord's supper should be administered once a month only, therefore it forbids it: The scripture does not mention, that the Christian Sabbath, should be observed on the first day of the week, therefore it forbids it. I might go on to multiply cases without number, in which, were we to confider the filence of

* Page 12.

feripture as a positive prohibition, we should be in danger of Will-worship. More than one-half of our acts of religious worship, and of social, and relative duties, would be absolutely forbidden: Yea, some most flagrant violations of moral virtue, might be perpetrated, not only with impunity, but with the sanction of the facred scriptures!!—Credat Judæus!

It has ever been confidered, by every rational mind, that inferences, and confiduences, refulting from fcripture premifes, by just and logical deduction, are equally binding, with a positive, and literal command. Thus our Lord proved the crimes of heart-murder, and heart-adultery; and thus he proved the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.* Such a sentiment as this, must be pronounced an insult on common sense, whether expressed by a Tertullian or a Birt.

The long quotation from Dr. Owen, in Mr. B's pamphlet, will very feebly support adult Baptism, for the Doctor, is evidenly reasoning on a subject of a very different nature. His design is to shew, that the Jews pleaded their natural descent from Abraham, as a just ground for their participation of saving and spiritual privileges; and that in this respect, they were awfully mistaken. This is evident from the last paragraph of the quotation. "The Church unto whom all the promises belong, are only those, who are heirs of Abraham's faith, believing as he did, and thereby interested in his covenant." The Doctor could not mean, that the descendants of Abraham, were not entitled, by virtue of their relation to that Patriarch, to any external privilege, or to that of

⁺ Matthew 5th. * Chap. 22d and 32d.

a visible covenant relation to God; for he was aware, that the Jews, as a nation, were a peculiar people, and more favoured, with external advantages, than any other.—Thus fays Paul,* "What advantage then hath the Jew? (i. e.) the feed of Abraham according to the flesh? or what profit is there in circumcision? (which feal was imparted to the feed according to the flesh, as well as to the feed according to the promise.) Much every way; chiefly because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."

The whole force, therefore, of this long quotation is loft, inafmuch, as it is directed to a point, which every evangelical Pædobaptiff, will as cordially acknowledge, as the most rigid Anabaptist, that the children of parents. professing their belief in the doctrines of the gospel, who are baptized, are not on account of the faith and piety of parents, entitled to spiritual privileges, and saving grace. But we affert, (and we conceive, that we are supported by scripture) that the children of such parents, thus early devoted to God, in the ordinance of Baptism, ARE BY IT ADMITTED INTO AN EXTERNAL, AND VISIBLE COVENANT WITH GOD, they are introduced into the school of Christ, to be taught the first principles of the oracles of God, agreeably to the express words, and obvious meaning of the commission given to the Apostles, by our Lord after his refurrection. "Go therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, + maderevoare (i. e.) GO MAKE THEM DISCIPLES. Thus the venerable TUR-

^{*} Rom. 3d. and 12th. # Matt. xxviii. 19.

[§] Leigh's Crit: Sac: Thus the word is rendered by Bullinger, Turretine, Stockius, Beza, Garaker, Lightfoot, Witfius, Pool, Dodderidge, and almost every Interpreter.

which I have chosen for my motto. "Qui præcipit omnes gentes baptizari, is etiam præcipit baptizari infantes, præceptum enim, de genere includit omnes species." A command, which requires the Baptism of ALL NATIONS, necessarily requires the Baptism of INFANTS, who constitute a part of them; for the command, that refers to the GENUS must include the SPECIES.

Having made these remarks, I shall proceed, to offer some reflections on the SUBJECT OF BAPTISM; and the MODE in which Baptism may be administered, agreeably to the word of God, and the PRACTICE of the Church, since the days of Christ and his Apostles.

First-The SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

Here I beg leave to express my fentiments, in the full, and strong language of the Assembly of Divines. "Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience unto him; BUT INFANTS OF SUCH AS ARE MEMBERS OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH ARE TO BE BAPTIZED. We readily acknowledge, that perfons who have never been educated in the principles of the Christian religion, have no right to the ordinance of Baptism, auntil they profess faith in Christ, and obedience to him. But, when they are brought to the knowledge of the etruth as it is in Jefus, they (together with their children) ought to be baptized, although they are arrived at years of maturity. This was, precifely the case with all, in the stime of Christ, who embraced him as the Messiah; and we find no instance, in the New Testament, in which

^{*} Inftit: Theol; tom. IV. Loc: 19. Qu: 20.

the children of those who thus believed, were baptized in adult age. The reason is obvious. They were admitted into the visible Church with their parents, and by virtue of their faith; in the same manner, as the children of Proselytes were admitted, with their parents, into the Jewish Church by the ordinance of circumcision.

And that the Infants of all, professing their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, ought to be admitted into the visible Church by Baptism, we shall endeavour to prove by the following propositions.

First.—Infants of believers in every age, and under every dispensation, prior to that of the gospel, were considered as in covenant with God, and members of the visible Church.

On this ground, the whole controverfy stands. It becomes us then, accurately to trace the sacred history, for instances in which, the LORD GOD has entered into covenant with man.

I think it will appear from the following, that in all ages of the Church, and in every covenant, God included, not only the parents, but their INFANT OFFSPRING.

The covenant of works made with Adam, in Paradife, included children. "Wherefore as by one man fin entered into the world, and death by fin: and fo death paffed upon all men, for that (or as the Greek $\varepsilon \varphi \omega$, might be rendered, in whom i. e. Adam) all have finned; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not finned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

The covenant with Noah, included his feed. § "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, and I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and your feed after you."

The covenant with Abraham, included his feed after him. ‡ "And I will establish my covenant between me, and thee, and thy feed after thee in their generations."

The covenant with the tribe of Levi. Deut. xviii. 1, 2. compared with Mal. ii. 4.

The covenant with Phinehas, included his feed after him.† "Behold I give unto him my covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his feed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood."

The covenant with David.* "" Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.

When God entered into covenant with the whole nation of Israel, their children were included. This is clear, from the whole of the solemn transactions on Mount Sinai. And when the Lord condescended to renew his covenant with Abraham to the whole Church, just before they entered Canaan, He addressed them in these remarkable words.** "Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God—your LITTLE ONES, your wives, &c. that thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into his oath, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day."

Hence it plainly appears, that in every covenant, which

[§] Gen. ix. 8, 9. ‡ Gen. xvii. 7. † Numbers xxv. 10, 11, 12.

* 2 Sam. vii. 12, 16. and chap. xxiii. 5. || Vide Exod. xix. 34.

** Deut. xxix. 19.

God has been pleased to make with men, their children—their LITTLE ONES were included!

And in that glorious day, (which we hope is now opening to the world) when "the ROD which is come forth out of the stem of Jesse, shall grow," and shelter all the nations of the earth, beneath its grateful shade; when "He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall asfemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the difperfed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth; when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the fea;" in this illustrious period, who are the perfons that shall partake of this glory and joy?—the GENTILES AND THEIR OFF-SPRING! fo testifies the prophet Isaiah.* "Thus saith the Lord God, behold I will lift up mine hands to the Gentiles, and fet up my standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders, "for they are the feed, of the bleffed of the Lord, AND THEIR OFFSPRING WITH THEM."+ Again, God fays, by the mouth of the same Prophet, ± "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and their SEED shall be known among the Gentiles, and their OFFSPRING among the people-THEY ARE THE SEED WHICH THE LORD HATH BLESSED!" The prophet Jeremiah, when speaking of the restoration of the Jews in the latter day, when there shall be but one fold, and one Shepherd, uses these striking words |-" They shall ferve the Lord their God, and David their King: (i. e. Jesus Christ, of whom David

was a type, fee Ezek. xxxiv. 23.) THEIR CHILDREN ALSO SHALL BE AS AFORETIME."

Thus we affirm, (in the strong language of Doctor Owen,*) that "no instance can be given, from the Old, or New Testament, since the days of Abraham; none from the approved practice of the primitive Church, of any person, or persons, born of professing, believing parents, who were themselves made partakers of the initial seal of the covenant, being then in instancy, and designed to be brought up in the knowledge of God, who were not made partakers with them of the same sign and seal of the covenant."

But, as that memorable covenant of God, with Abraham, is that transaction, which, in a peculiar and highly emphatical manner, graciously includes the *infant off-spring* of pious parents. And as this transaction is particularly combated by our Baptist brethren, it demands our more minute attention. The terms of the covenant are these.†—"AND I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT BETWEEN ME AND THEE, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE, IN THEIR GENERATIONS, FOR AN EVERIASTING COVENANT, TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE.

This evidently includes children. I know not a Baptiss that denies it. But to avoid the force of the argument arising from these words, in favour of the covenant relation, and church-membership of the children of believing parents, under the gospel, our opponents say, that this covenant was nothing more than national, the covenant of circumcision, and included nothing but a grant of

^{*} Dr. Owen's Tracts, p. 576. + Gen. xvii. 7.

economy is abolished by Jesus Christ, that neither we, nor our children, can lay any claim to an interest in the blessings of this transaction.

But we shall endeavour to prove that this Abrahamic covenant, was the Christian, or Gospel Covenant—that Covenant of Grace under which we now are, and that Abraham, in this act was considered as the Covenant-Head, the father of believing Gentiles, as well as Jews. Consequently, the priviliges granted to him, and to his seed, belong to us and to our children, agreeably to the declaration of Peter.* "The promise is unto you and to your Children."

Now, this could not be the covenant of works, for no fuch, was ever made with man after his apostacy. It could not be the covenant of Horeb, because that was made four hundred and thirty years, after the Lord spake these words to Abraham. The abolition of the Mosaic ritual, therefore could not destroy the covenant interest, and church-membership of children, whose right was established for ages before the Levitical law, or the birth of Moses: but it was the COVENANT OF GRACE; unchangeable in its nature and privileges!

And this position is supported by the following reasons: First. It is stilled an everlasting covenant.

Second. It is founded on free grace. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God:" "therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all

* Acts ii. 39. § Rom, iv. 2, 16.

the feed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all."

Third. It was confirmed by the oath of God.* "By myfelf have I fworn, faith the Lord, for because thou haft done this thing, and haft not withheld thy fon, thine only fon; that in bleffing I will blefs thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy feed as the stars of heaven, and as the fand which is upon the fea-shore; and thy feed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be bleffed." ALL THE NATI-ONS OF THE EARTH. This expression incontrovertibly proves, that the covenant made with Abraham, was not national, of the same nature with that made at Horeb. and confined to the natural descendants of the Patriarch. But the bleffings of this covenant, were to be as widely extended as the earth. GENTILES, as well as JEWS. were to partake of divine bleffings through the illustrious channel, the feed of Abraham, the LORD JESUS CHRISTI

Fourth. This covenant was confirmed also by the death of Christ. To Now I say, that Jesus Christ was a Minister of the Circumcision for the truth of God, TO CONFIRM THE PROMISES MADE UNTO THE FATHERS: and that the GENTILES might glorify God for his mercy, &c." and Jesus is stilled the Messenger of the Covenant.

Children were once entitled to the bleffings, and promifes, made to the Fathers, and if they are not now entitled, is Christ a faithful Messenger? Has he confirmed

^{*} Gen. xxii. 16, 17. ‡ Rom. xv. 8, 9. § Mal. iii. 1.

the promifes made unto the Fathers? The Apostle explicitly declares, that Abraham's covenant was confirmed in Christ; and that the Levitical law cannot disannul the promise; in those remarkable words.* "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect."

Fifth. The leading promise of the covenant declares it a covenant of gospel grace. "I WILL BE A GOD UNTO THEE!" Here Jehovah gives himself to his people, and to their seed! What greater blessings could God bestow? Can the Gospel covenant ensure a greater?—Can this be stilled, with any propriety, a carnal covenant, a mere temporal grant of the Land of Canaan?

Sixth. The bleffings, of the Abrahamic covenant, are given to the GENTILES,† "That the bleffings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." This, unequivocally, proves that it could not be the peculiar, national covenant, afterwards made with Moses, for that was never enjoined on the GENTILES.

Seventh. The Abrahamic covenant was the gospel-covenant, because the same words are used by the New Testament writers, and applied to the Church of Christ.§

Here it may be proper to notice, an objection which the Anti-pædobaptists urge against this interpretation, that all the promises made to the feed of Abraham, were made to Christ personally, and to him only. In the support of which, they plead the expression of Paul. "He saith, not to seeds, as of many, but as of one seed, and to thy

fined, it will follow, that they were not made to the Jewish Church, any more than to the Christian.— Again, this objection operates, as forcibly against adult believers, as their children; for if the promises belong to none but Christ personally, then neither believers, nor their children, have any right to them. Hence it follows, that by this expression of Paul, but of one seed that is Christ, consisting of Jews and Gentiles.* On any other principle, there is no reconciling it, to the drift of the Apostle in this place, to the promises themselves, of which he is speaking, or to the concurrent sense of scripture.

Now let any ferious, candid Reader reflect on these arguments, and let him judge of the truth and propriety of that declaration made by Mr. B.† "Therefore there is no evidence of the offspring of believers having any peculiar relation to Abraham, or of their being more interested in the promises made to his seed, than the children of others." "An absurdity sounded on Jewish prejudice."

The argument therefore, drawn from the Abrahamic covenant, may be comprized in the following fyllogism:

The feed of Abraham are entitled to the privileges of the Abrahamic covenant.

Children of believers, by virtue of their covenant relation, are the feed of Abraham.

Therefore children are entitled to the privileges of that covenant.

‡ Gal. iii. 16. * Vide 1 Cor. xii. 13. † Page 10, 11. Should

Should our opponents, reluctate to admit the idea, of God's entering into covenant with infants, and judge it derogatory from the honour of Jehovah; I would reply in the words of a fenfible Writer on this subject.* "There is a very rational, and just fense, in which God may be faid, to establish his covenant with INFANTS. For the scripture expressly fays, " "that he established his covenant with the cattle, and the fowls; folemnly engaging no more to drown them by a flood." Is there any thing strange, then, or unreasonable, in God's establishing his covenant with infants; folemnly engaging to pour his spirit, and blessing upon them? Or, that the evils they fuffer, in consequence of Adam's fin, shall be removed, and amply recompenfed, through the righteousness of Christ? Most surely not at all. But, if there is a rational, and just sense, in which God may establish his covenant with INFANTS; there is the highest reason to PRESUME that he HAS done it, and that they ARE taken into his covenant: for if he has graciously condescended to establish his covenant with the brute creation, promising no more to deluge them; and appointed a standing token or memorial of his covenant, viz. the bow in the clouds; much more, furely, may we hope, that he has established his covenant with INFANTS, promifing to deliver them from the fatal confequences of the fall; and that he has appointed a standing token or fign of this covenant, to perpetuate its knowledge, and remembrance in the Church."

This covenant being everlasting, must be unchangeable.

^{*} Twogood's Baptism of Infants, a reasonable service, p. 3. note.

| Gen. ix. 9, &c.

The only alteration therefore, which has taken place by the abolition of the Mosaic ritual, and the introduction of the gospel dispensation, is this, the SEAL is changed. Under the law of Moses, CIRCUMCISION WAS THE SEAL; under the gospel, BAPTISM, being more adapted to the mildness, and simplicity of the dispensation of Christ.

Hence it follows, that if the Gospel forbid children, to share in the privileges of their believing parents, IT ISTHE ONLY DISPENSATION THAT EVER DID, SINCE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD!

Our next proposition arises out of the preceding.

Second.—Children never have been cast out of this covenant, therefore they have an indisputable right to Baptism as the seal.

I prefume, that nothing can be more evident, than that Infants were ONCE in covenant; if fo, THEY MUST BE TO THIS DAY. For although the dispensation be altered, and the seal changed, the effence of the covenant remains, the privilege of having God for our God, and the God of our seed!!

The Anti-pædobaptists call on us to prove that Infants are now in covenant. To this we reply, that we have proved that they were included in every covenant, which the Lord God has been graciously pleased to make with man, prior to the dispensation of the gospel, and therefore, we rationally conclude, that as God is unchangeable, the covenant is everlasting; and, as children are not capable of breaking it, THEY MUST BE STILL CONSIDERED IN COVENANT.

In our turn, we call on them to prove, that they are excom-

excommunicated. And we appeal to every man of common fense, whether the proof of this does not rest with them.

Nothing can be more clear, than that they had a right, and if they have not NOW—HOW, and WHEN, did they forfeit that right? This is a question, which not one of the Adversaries of Infant Baptism, has ever been able to answer. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that Mr. B, has very prudently declined it. It is again asked, "By what authority, do any person resule Infants the privilege of a covenant relation to God? this privilege God once granted, and if it be taken away, WHEN WAS IT? AND FOR WHAT REASON?"

Nay, we will go further, and fay that they not only never HAVE forfeited, but never COULD forfeit this privilege; because they were not capable of actual fin, and the Lord God will not break covenant first. Again, if Children be cast out of the Church, and be deprived of those privileges to which they were once entitled, by virtue of the faith of their Parents, their exclusion must be the effect of JUDGMENT, or of MERCY. It cannot be of judgment, because not being capable of sinning, they could not merit fo great a curse, as that of excommunication. And if we allow, that the promise made to the feed of Abraham, contained, or implied any bleffing, it will follow, that to be deprived of a right to this promise, is a mark of displeasure. It cannot be in mercy, unless we can prove that God has given them a greater in its stead: and we again ask with confidence, WHAT IS THAT GREATER MERCY, which God has conferred upon Children, instead of that they have lost? "A

F.

fpiritual

fpiritual privilege (fays the great Dr. Owen) once granted by God unto any, cannot be changed, difannulled, or abrogated, without a special divine revocation of it, or the substitution of a greater privilege, and mercy in the room of it, for who shall disannul what God hath granted? And to say, a privilege so granted, may be revoked, even by God himself, without the substitution of a greater privilege, and mercy in the room of it, is contrary to the goodness of God, his love and care unto his Church; contrary to his constant course of proceeding with it, from the soundation of the world, wherein he went on in the enlargement, and increase of its privileges, until the coming of Christ. And to suppose it under the gospel, is contrary to all his promises, the honour of Christ, and a multitude of express testimonies of scripture."*

Let it be observed, that if we deny Infants, a title to the covenant, and to its seal, it would frustrate one grand end of our Lord's incarnation, and the design of his gospel. Jesus came to multiply, not to diminish the privileges of the Church. But if the seed of believers, under the gospel, be denied the privilege of covenant mercies, which the children of the Jews enjoyed, this shocking consequence will inevitably follow, that Jesus, who sustained the amiable character of the Friend of Sinners, was far from being the Friend of Infants, inasmuch, as his coming has excluded them from the covenant, and cast them out into the kingdom of Satan! But why? WHAT EVIL HAVE THEY DONE? Let those, who use their pens, and their tongues against those dear LITTLE ONES, answer the question.

We will now attend to the language of the NEW TESTAMENT; and collect what is there faid, of the privileges of the infant feed of believers. Not one passage shall we find, which affords the most distant hint, that the covenant relation of children is destroyed. The laws and customs, concerning the admission of Infants into the visible Church, and their receiving the initiating feal, have not been repealed by Christ, or his Apostles; had they been repealed, it would have been absolutely necesfary to record fuch a memorable transaction; an act which fo materially affected every Disciple of Christ. It would have been necessary to record it, because the Fews had ever been accustomed, to consider their offspring as in covenant, and a part of the visible Church. They would therefore, continue to view them in the same light, and THEY DID, for they were never informed to the contrary. Nay, Jefus expressly tells them, that he was as willing as ever, to receive their Infants, when it is faid, I "They brought unto him also Infants, that he would touch them, but when his Disciples saw it they rebuked them: but Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: FOR OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD." If by the term Kingdom of God, we understand the visible Church, the point is given up; but if it meant Kingdom of Glory, then we ask-If the Lord God will admit little Children into the Church triumphant, who will dare deny them a place in the Church militant? The language of Peter* is strongly emphatical-The promise is to you, AND TO YOUR CHILDREN! These words were

‡ Luke xviii. 15, 16. * Acts ii. 39.

addressed to the Jews, and gave them the sirmest assurance, that their Children were considered in the Jame light by God, and entitled to the Jame external privileges, under the gospel dispensation, as they were under that of Moses. None, I think, can deny that this promise does, as plainly, include the seed of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus, as the promise to Abraham, "I will be a God to thee and unto thy seed."

What could the Apostle mean by the promise being unto them, and unto their Children? for if they are not in covenant, they have no right to the promise!

This mode of conduct, would make a very unfavourable impression on the minds of Jews, and yield them very poor encouragement to embrace Christianity. You must tell them, that, "notwithstanding your Children have, from the creation of the world, to the present day, been entitled to the same privileges of Church-membership, as yourselves, yet, on your receiving the gospel, your Children must be excluded." But how melancholy these tidings in the ears of every considerate Jew!

A great variety of arguments, might eafily be adduced to prove, that children of parents, who profess their belief of Christianity, have an indisputable right to Baptism, as the initiating seal of the covenant of grace.

The following are submitted to the attention of the candid Reader:

First.—Children are members of the visible Church of Christ. Of such is the kingdom of God: i. e. the visible Church is the kingdom of God, and children belong to that kingdom. SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TANDIA & Prepa INFANTS; the same word is used concerning Jesus

in the manger, and translated "babe." These babes were brought to Jesus, (not to be healed of bodily diseases) but to be bleffed; therefore children are capable of receiving spiritual blessings. The Disciples were culpable in attempting to forbid them, and fo, I prefume, are all those now, who act a similar part. The question was. Whether children might be brought to Jesus to receive his bleffing? He replies—by all means; for they are members of the Church, and therefore I am concerned for them, they belong to my fold, and as the Shepherd, I am to take care of them. Accordingly, he took them up in his arms and bleffed them. True; he did not baptize them (for he baptized none.+) But he did that which was equal to it, he took them up in his arms, and declared them members of his kingdom. As Christ gave them the thing signified by baptism, we are justified in giving them the fign; for as Dr. Owen justly observes. "They who have the thing fignified have a right to the fign of it." The most rigid opposer of Infant Baptism. will not venture to fay that the children of believing parents, are not capable of receiving that grace, which is fignified in Baptism. Nay, it is certain that some children are actually partakers of the grace of regeneration, i. e. all fuch who die in infancy, if not, they must perish without hope; therefore fuch have a right to Baptism. Be it observed also, that Infants are created for an eternal duration, and are capable of enjoying eternal happiness. or fuffering eternal misery; and at death, must pass into one or other of those states: and as all infants are children of wrath, and under the curse, unless they are regenerated, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God: Now, as regeneration is that, which is fignified by Baptism, it follows that children ought to be baptized.

Secondly.-Children are relatively holy, therefore they ought to be baptized. There is a two-fold holiness spoken of in scripture, a personal holiness, or sanctification of the spirit, and a faderal or relative holiness .-For the latter, we plead in behalf of our children, on the ground of the Apostle's affertion.* "Else where your children unclean, but now they are holy." To fettle the meaning of the terms, unclean and holy, we must have recourse to scripture. The great Mr. Locke, in his commentary fays, "By holy, is meant that relative holiness, whereby any thing, hath an appropriation to God."-The term aros is used in the same sense as it is, when applied to the Jews as a nation—to the temple, and the various utenfils, i. e. they were feparated to a holy use, devoted to the service of God. Thus, the word analapros is used to fignify, persons out of the pale of the visible Church, not devoted to God. Therefore the Septuagint apply this word to the Heathen. " The unclean anaθapros shall not pass over it." In this sense also does Peter use the term. + "God hath shewed me, that I should not call any man, common, or unclean." ακαθαρτον λεγειν ανθρωπον. Our Baptist brethren, with a view to avoid the force of the argument, arifing from the relative holiness of children, in consequence of the faith of the parent, contend, that the term holy, means legitimate: as if the Apostle had faid, "If but one of the parents is a believer, your children are legitimate, but if neither-then they

^{*} I Cor. vii. 14. 1 Ifa. xxxv. 8. + Acts. x. 28.

are all BASTARDS. This is the necessary result of confining the meaning of the term holy, to that of legitimacy; an absurdity too glaring to be cherished for a moment!

We affert, on the authority of that keen difputant, Mr. Baxter, that the word holy, is used near fix hundred times in scripture, for a relative holiness, and a separation to God, and NEVER once used for legitimacy. The Apostle Paul reasons in the same manner, when he says,* "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches." Hence we conclude, that children are made partakers of faderal holiness, as well as the parents, and that therefore, they are entitled to Baptism.

Thirdly.—Baptism came in the stead of circumcision. It has been observed above, that God made a covenant with Abraham four hundred and thirty years before the national covenant with Ifrael, and appointed circumcision as its feal. And here let it be remarked, that as foon as Abraham was circumcifed, all his Children, his household, were made partakers of the fame fign; which is a convincing proof, that his Children were confidered as included in the fame covenant. Now, by the establishment of the gospel dispensation, the Mosaic œconomy, and confequently circumcifion, is abolished, and Baptism is instituted in its room. This appears clear from the language of Paul. 4 "And he received the fign of circumcifion, a feal of the righteousness of faith, which he had yet being uncircumcifed." Here it is worthy our notice, that the Apostle+ calls the gospel (in opposition to the law) the righteousness which is of faith.

^{*} Rom. xi, 16. § Rom. iv. 11. + Chap. x. 6.

Again we observe,

That the design of both ordinances, (Circumcision and Baptism) is the same, viz. A DEDICATION TO GOD, and our relation to him, by an external and visible covenant. As in circumcifion, the child was dedicated to God, and laid under an obligation to observe all the statutes, and ordinances of that dispensation, so in baptism, the subject is devoted to the Lord Jesus, and thereby bound to love, honour, and obey him; whence it is reasonable to suppose that the one succeeded the other. As there were two feals to the covenant of Grace, under the Old Testament, so there must be under the New: And if Baptisin do not come in the room of circumcision, there is no ordinance, that can be considered as such; consequently one feal must have been lost, and the Christian Church is inferior, in point of privilege, to the Jewish, whereas "the law was only a shadow of good things to come."

Fourthly.—None should be denied the benefit of ordinances, who have neither an actual, nor a moral incapacity for receiving the benefits thereof; Children have no such incapacity, therefore they are to be admitted into the visible Church of Christ by Baptism.

They are not actually incapable, for the Children of the Jews, were judged by God, to be capable of fuftaining a covenant relation, and received the feal thereof, and it would be abfurd to suppose, that the Children of Christian parents are less capable, or less worthy than they were.

They are not *morally* incapable, for they have never finned, and God has promifed to blefs them.* "I will "Ifaiah xliv. 3." pour

pour out my Spirit upon thy feed, and my bleffing upon thine offspring." They cannot therefore be supposed, in any one instance, to have forfeited their right to a visible relation to God.

But we will advance one step further on this ground, and affirm that Children are capable of receiving the greatest bleffing, which God ever bestowed on mortals. of having GOD AS THEIR GOD! They are capable of acceptance with God, capable of justification, and fanctification, (which, according to the Baptist principles) are necessary to baptism. "Hence then it follows, that if they are capable of receiving those qualifications, which are requifite for the most important privilege of falvation, they, unquestionably, are capable of those, which are requisite for the less important privilege of baptism. For if the one be denied, fo may the other. Infants are capable of a divinely conflituted union with the infinitely worthy Saviour, not less than adults; and are they incapable of the symbol of that union? Infants are capable of the influences of the Holy Spirit, not less than adults; and are they incapable of the symbol of those influences? He that can believe it, let him believe it."*

Should it be asked, What benefit do Children receive from Baptism? I reply, as much as the Children of the Jews from circumcision. Children are capable of answering some of the ends of Baptism, though not all: They can be admitted as disciples into the school of Christ, and as subjects of his kingdom, which is the very first design of Baptism. Children are considered as subjects of Great Britain, although they are not capable, at

^{*} Dr. Williams, vol. 1. p. 210.

present, of answering every end, and fulfilling every duty of a subject. The Children of Freemen are free, altho' infants are not capable of discharging every duty, and performing every act of freemen. "Let it be remembered, (as Mr. Henry fays) that a lease of a covenant between a landlord and a tenant, may be of use to a child, though he does not understand it; nay, though when he grows up, he may forfeit the benefit of it." There are many inflances, in which Infant Baptisin has been abundantly bleffed: The pious Author, just quoted, fays, "For my own part, I publicly express my gratitude to God for my Infant Baptism, not only as it was an early admission into the visible body of Christ, but as it furnished my pious parents, with a good argument (and I trust, through grace, a prevailing argument) for an early dedication of myself to God, in my Childhood. If God has wrought any good work upon my foul, I defire, with humble thankfulnefs, to acknowledge, the MORAL IN-FLUFNCE OF MY INFANT BAPTISM UPON IT."+-And should children, who were baptized in their infancy. forfake the Lord, the guilt of the breach of the covenant, does not rest on the parent, but on the children.

Thus I conceive, that the right of the Infants of Befievers, stands firm, on the ground of their covenant relation to God, and therefore I conclude, that they ought to be baptized. It is impossible for them, who deny this conclusion, to produce one instance, in the New Testament, of a person professing the Christian religion, who delayed the Baptism of his Children, until they arrived at maturity. Nor is there one instance, in which a Child who has been baptized in infancy, was baptized a SECOND TIME in adult age. If our Opponents can produce one fuch inflance, fanctioned by the COMMAND OF GOD, or by SCRIPTURE EXAMPLE, we will cheerfully give up the point, fubmit to immersion, and suffer our little ones (however dear to us) to be cut off from all share in covenant, blessings, and cast out of the visible Church of Christ. But no such instance has ever been produced, neither will it be; for the inspired Writers of the New Testament, inform us, that when a Jewish, or a Gentile parent embraced Christianity, not the parent only, but all his children were admitted also, by Baptism. Thus we are informed, that Lydia and her household; Cornelius and his family; the Jailor and his household were baptized.

A late Writer among the Anti-pædobaptists takes it for granted, that there were no Infants in the Jailor's house, because it is said, that the Apostles preached the word to all in his house. If this reasoning be just, then we may fairly infer, that there was not an Infant among the mula titudes to whom John preached; for it is faid that John preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Ifrael. Besides, the following passage translated literally, would read thus: "He believing in God, rejoiced all the house over." Και ηγαλλιασαλο πανοικι πεπιςευκως λω θεω. Now it is evident, that the participle fingular memiseuxus cannot express the faith of the Jailor, and of all in his house, which would have required a verb or participle plural. And it is remarkable, that (according to Dr. Guyse) the Syriac version, when speaking of Lydia, reads the passage thus: "The Children of her house were F 2 baptized,"

Eaptized," which shews, at least, that in those early times, Children were deemed such parts of the household as were baptized.†

It was the opinion of Dr. Lightfoot, that it had been a well-known, and long-continued custom among the Jews, to admit Profelytes into the Church of Israel, by baptizing them, and their whole families, inclusive of their Infants: and therefore, that the expression, "Lydia and her household," refers to that custom.*

Thus the Lord God of Heaven, has manifested a peculiar regard to Children in every age. Jesus, with divine tenderness, took them up in his arms, and blessed them. He gave commission to his Apostles, to feed his lambs; and from the creation of the world, to the present day, they have been included in every covenant; and entitled to every benefit, contained in those solemn engagements, to which their parents were entitled.

Hence it follows,

Thirdly.—It is both unkind, and unwarrantable to deny Children a right to Paptifin, as the initiating feal of the covenant, fince they cannot have forfeited their covenant relation to God.

I have never confidered this subject as effential to salvation, whether administered in infancy, or in adult age; whether by fprinkling, or by dipping. Yet I hold myself bound, to plead the cause of (what I conceive to be) truth with firmness; and ever to confider the loss of private friendship, as not deserving a moment's attention, when put in competition with it; especially when that loss is procured, by no other conduct, than that of SELF-DEFENCE.

Influenced by these motives, I proceed to observe, that it is unkind and unwarrantable, to deny Children a right to Baptism, as an initiating seal of the covenant.—

It is unkind; fince they partake of the corruptions of their parents, would we deprive them of their privileges?

It is unkind; because it weakens the hope of the salvation of Insants. I do not intimate that all Insants, because of their Baptism, are saved. But the argument is this: Those who deny Insant Baptism, deny it, because they are not now in covenant, and because they are incapable of answering the end and design of Baptism.—Now if this be true, there can be no ground, on which to found our hopes of their salvation. For it God deny Baptism to Children, it is because they are incapable of receiving that, which is signified by Baptism, his grace; consequently, the inevitable result is, THEY MUST PERISH!!

But if our Opponents will acknowledge, that Infants are capable of receiving the grace of God, then we affert, that they have an equal claim to Baptism, as the sign, with believers themselves. Mr. B. says, "the future happiness of all dying Infants, without distinction, is that, which meets my most sirm, and cordial belief." And then, in the plenitude of his benevolence, adds, "If any of my Pædobaptist friends are of the same opinion, I REJOICE."

I am happy to remove the doubt, which hangs on Mr. B's mind, and to affure him, that he is by no means folitary, in his benevolent belief. This fentiment, which is fo honourable to the bleffed God, and is not subversive of one gospel doctrine, has been "my most firm and cordial

cordial belief," ever fince I have been capable of thinking, with any propriety, on subjects of religion. It is the fentiment of a very large majority of Pædobaptists: and is much more confistent with our general principles, than with the principles of our Opponents. For we believe, that all Infants are delivered from the condemning power of original guilt, by virtue of the precious, and efficacious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; consefequently, as every Infant dying in that flate, is received into the Church triumphant, we believe that every furviving Infant ought to be admitted into the Church militant, as foon as either of the parents declares his, or her belief of the Christian religion. But the Advocates for adult Baptism, reason thus: None are to be baptized but those, who are capable of faith, and repentance; Infants are not capable, therefore are not to be baptized. From this mode of reasoning we justly retort, if saith and repentance are absolutely necessary to salvation, Infants are not capable of believing or repenting, confequently they cannot be faved. Hence it follows, that as Mr. B. cordially believes the falvation of "ALL DYING INFANTS WITHOUT DISTINCTION," he is not indebted to his Anti-pædobaptist principles, for this benevolent article of his faith.—Again,

To deny Infants a right to Baptism, is unwarrantable; because it diminishes the Church of Christ, by excluding more than nineteen parts in twenty, from the Christian world.

It is unwarrantable; because it is excommunicating those, who, IN EVERY AGE, were entitled to this relation, and who were confirmed in their privilege by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is doing that, for which they have no authority, and appears to be little less, than an afsumption of the divine prerogative.

I shall add but one remark more, under this proposition,

It is unwarrantable; BECAUSE IT IS CONTRARY TO THE CUSTOM OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ALL AGES.

It is granted, that as the subject in debate, is a matter of fact, an appeal to the custom of antiquity, and the testimony of Authors, who slourished in the earliest ages, is highly proper. For if the Churches established by the Apostles, admitted Infants into their societies by baptism, it must have been a fact known to all: or if they uniformly denied the right of Infants, this must have been EQUALLY NOTORIOUS.

I proceed then to examine the truth of Mr. B's affertion,* "THERE IS NO CERTAIN EVIDENCE WHATEVER THAT BABES WERE BAPTIZED ANY WHERE, OR BY ANY ONE, FOR THE SPACE OF TWO HUNDRED YEARS AFTER THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST."

It is observable, that this position, like almost all others of the Anabaptists on this subject, is of the negative kind. To render the argument conclusive, I conceive it ought to run thus: There is certain evidence that no babe was baptized, any where, or by any one, for the space of two hundred years after the birth of Jesus Christ. But on reslection, it is probable, that Mr. B. applies Tertullian's sagacious maxim, to the writings of the Fathers, as well as to the writings of the Apos-

TLES, "THE FATHERS FORBID, WHAT THEY DO NOT MENTION."

The testimonies of the following persons, who were the immediate successors of the Apostles, I beg leave to place in opposition to the affertion of my Opponent.

JUSTIN MARTYR flourished about forty years after the time of the Apostles, and died A. D. 167. In his Apology he has these remarkable words.†—Και, πολλοι &c.
παιδων εμαθηθεύθησαν τω Χείσω. "Many of sixty or seventy years of age, were made Disciples to Christ from their Infancy." Now this Writer uses the same word, as Jesus did in his command to his Apostles: Go and disciple all nations, εμαθηθεύσαι. And to be made Disciples of Christ, from their Infancy, I think could mean nothing less, than that they were admitted by Baptism, into the Church, or School of Christ.

IRENÆUS was a Greek Bishop of Lyons, and put to death A. D. 203. He was cotemporary with Polycarp, who was the Disciple of John the Baptist, and wrote about sixty-seven years after the Apostle. Now, if he be found to speak of the Baptism of Infants, it may be presumed, that it was the practice of the Apostolic Church. That he does, will appear evident from his own words —Omnes enim venit, per semetipsum salvare, omnes, inquam per eum, RENASCUNTER IN DEUM, INFANTES et PARVULOS, et pueros, et juvenes, et seniores. "He (i. e. Christ) came to save all persons by himself; all, I say, who by him are regenerated unto God, Infants, and little ones, and young men, and aged persons."

⁺ Justin Martyr's Apol. II. & Lib. adver. Hæreses, II. cap. 39.

The phrase, regenerated unto God, is constantly used, by the Writers of that age, for Baptism. And for the truth of this interpretation, we appeal to the judgment of our learned Opponents.

This affords another proof, that Infant Baptism was the practice of the Apostolic Church, because this Writer, who was born several years before the death of the Apostle John, cannot be supposed to have been ignorant of the opinion, and the practice of the Apostles, concerning a subject of so much importance.

The testimony of TERTULLIAN, may also, be very properly adduced, in favour of Infant Baptism. This Author, who died A. D. 216, advises Parents to defer the Baptism of their Infants until a certain period, "UNLESS IN CASE OF NECESSITY, or DANGER OF DEATH!" This advice, unanswerably proves, that the Baptism of Infants was the universal practice of Christians in his time.

These are the testimonies in favour of Insant Baptism, which are to be found in the writings of this, very early period of the Church, and are sufficient to overthrow the affertion of Mr. B. "that there is no evidence of this practice for the space of two hundred years after the birth of Christ."

The probable reason, why we have no more ample, and repeated testimonies on this subject, immediately after the Apostolic age, without presumption, we may conclude to be this; the right of Infants to Baptism was never called in question, and no disputes had, at that time, arisen in the Church on the subject.

This is supported by the more frequent and express

testimonies, given by the Writers in the succeeding ages, as soon as error began to shew its head.

About this time arose ORIGEN, who was born A. D. 185, when a dispute was agitated concerning original sin; some afferted that Infants were not tainted by Adam's transgression, while others maintained that they were.—Origen embraced the latter opinion, and reasoning on this subject, he asks—"What is the reason, that, whereas the Baptism of the Church, is instituted for the forgiveness of sins, Infants also by the Usage of the Church are baptized, when if there was nothing in Infants which wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of Baptism would be needless to them?" In another treatise, he expresses himself more fully, (if possible) when he says, "For this also it was, that the Church had, from the Apostles a tradition, or order to give Baptism also to Infants."*

The next testimony that presents itself, is that of CY-PRIAN, who was converted to Christianity A. D. 240. In his time arose one *Fidus*, an African Bishop, who denied original fin, and was of opinion, that the Baptism of Infants should be deferred until the eighth day.

On this occasion, a council of fixty-fix Bishops was convened at Carthage, A. D. 253, of which CYPRIAN was chosen president. And the result of their deliberations, was this; they were unanimously of opinion, that the Baptism of Infants was not to be deferred until the eighth day: And the decree which they passed on this occasion, closes with these memorable words:— "Wherefore, dearly beloved, it is our opinion, that from

⁺ Hom. 8, in Levit, cap. 12.

^{*} Comments in Epis. Rom:

Baptism, and the grace of God, who is kind and benign to all, none ought to be prohibited by us; which as it is to be observed with respect to ALL, SO ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO INFANTS, AND THOSE WHO ARE BUT JUST BORN, who deserve our help, and the divine mercy."

ST. AMBROSE, according to Mr. B's quotation, "was not baptized until the full age of a man, or more." It this be true, then he acted contrary to the practice of the Apostles, as he himself testifies. "The Baptism of Infants was the practice of the Apostles themselves, and of the Church until now." St. Ambrose lived about 274 years from the time of the Apostles.

ST. AUGUSTIN, who lived A. D. 370, was frequently engaged in a controverfy with PELAGIUS, who strongly opposed the doctrine of original sin. St. Augustin insists that Children are polluted by original fin, and therefore urges the necessity of baptizing them, faying, "why are Infants baptized for the remission of fin, if they have none?" Now, unquestionably, if Infant Baptism had not been the invariable practice of the Church, Pelagius would have immediately and gladly fled to this refuge. But fo far from pleading this, he confiders it as a gross calumny cast on him, to say, that he denied Infant Baptism. On the contrary, he fays, "We confess, that Infants ought to be baptized for the remission of sins, ACCORDING TO THE RULE OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, AND ACL CORDING TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE APOSTLES." At another time he fays, "Nunquam fe, vel impium aliquem Hæreticum, audisse qui hoc quod proposuit de parvulis diceret;" i. e. "THAT HE NEVER HAD HEARD

OF ANY ONE, NOT EVEN AN IMPIOUS HERETIC, WHO WOULD SAY SUCH A THING OF LITTLE CHILDREN."

The testimony of the renowned CALVIN, A. D. 1509, is also full to the point. + "Now every one must see that the Baptism of Infants, which is supported by such a body of scriptural evidence, was in no respect of human invention. It is foolishly trifling to object, that we never find, that even one Infant was baptized by the hands of the Apostles. For though it be not expressly mentioned by the Evangelists, yet as they are never excluded, whenever an account is given of any family's being baptized; who then, but a mad man, would thence infer, that they were not baptized? If arguments of that kind were of force, by a parity of reason, women should be forbidden to partake of the Lord's supper, as we do not read that they were admitted to it, in the time of the Apostles; but here we are satisfied with the rule of faith. For when we confider the defign of the inflitution, we can easily determine, who are to be the subjects of it: which we observe also in Baptism. For it we reslect on the end for which it was instituted, we evidently see that it is not less suitable for Infants, than for adults. And therefore they cannot be deprived of it, without doing manifest injustice to the will of its divine Author. But whereas they diffeminate a report among the fimple common people, that a long series of years had elapsed, after the refurrection of Christ, in which the Baptism of Infants was unknown, they are guilty of the basest falsehood.* FOR THERE IS NO WRITER, HOWEVER AN-

⁺ Calvin's Instit. Lib. IV. Cap. XV. Sect. 19.

CIENT, WHO DOES NOT CERTAINLY REFER THE ORIGIN OF IT TO THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES."

Many other testimonies might be brought forward, but a greater number would needlessly swell this treatise.‡

On the review however, we may maintain, that no historical fact, can be more honourably, and more uniformly supported than this, that from the time of the Apostles, to the year 410, the Baptism of Infants, was the UNIVERSAL PRACTICE of the Church: for PE-LAGIUS, (who lived about that time, and who would most gladly have denied it, could he have done it, with any prospect of success) as we have shewn, expressly avows it. And no one, was better qualified to decide on the practice of the Churches than himself: for though he was born in Britain, yet he was a confiderable time at Carthage, in Africa, and at Jerufalem, and had travelled through all the noted Greek and Eastern Churches in Europe and Afia. And Dr. WALL has abundantly proved, that from the year of our Lord 400 to 1100, no fociety of men, in all that period of feven hundred years, ever pretended to fay, that it was unlawful to baptize Infants. "As these evidences are for the first four hundred years, in which there appears only one man, TER. TULLIAN, that advised the delay of Infant Baptism IN

[†] Those who wish to see this sast established by the concurrent testimony of the ancient Fathers, will be highly entertained by a perusal of Mr. Two-coop's admirable pamphlet, entitled, "The Baptism of Insants, a reasonable service," especially Argum. V. from which, I readily confess, a great part of the above testimonies is extracted, not having the original Authors in my possession, nor within my reach. The curious and learned Reader will be gratisted by consulting Mr. Wall, whose labours have done him honour, and thrown great light on this subject.

SOME CASES; and one GREGORY, that did perhaps practife fuch delay in the case of his children: But no fociety of men, fo thinking, or fo practifing; nor any one man, faying it was unlawful to baptize Infants: So in the next feven hundred years, there is not fo much as one man to be found, that either spoke for, or practised any fuch delay, BUT ALL THE CONTRARY. And when about the year 1190; one fest among the Waldenses declared against the baptizing of Infants, as being incapable of falvation, the main body of that people rejected that their opinion, and they of them, that held that opinion, quickly dwindled away, and disappeared, there being no more heard of, holding that tenet, till the rifing of the German Anabaptifts, anno 1522. ALL THE NATIONAL CHURCHES NOW IN THE WORLD, DO PROFESS, AND PRACTISE INFANT BAPTISM. †"

As Mr. B. has faid fo much on the genealogy of the Anabaptists, it may be necessary for me to pay some attention to it also. On which subject, I cannot refer to an Author of higher respectability than MOSHEIM.*

As Mr. B. has fet the example, he cannot be offended or my tracing up the origin of the Anabaptists to that sect, which made its appearance in the 16th century, of whom Mosheim says, "The true origin of that sect, which acquired the denomination of Anabaptists, by their administering anew, the rite of Baptism, to those who came over to their communion, and derived that of Mennomites, from the samous man, to whom they owe the greatest part of their selicity, is hid in the remotest depths

of antiquity, and is, of consequence, extremely difficult to be ascertained."

This Author observes, "That the Mennonites are not entirely mistaken, when they boast of their descent from the Waldenses, and Petrobrussians—and before the time of the reformation, many of this sect lay concealed in almost all the countries of Europe. However, among them were persons of different ways of thinking—some were of a fanatical complexion; and others of a more prudent, and rational turn of mind. The views and hopes of these people were revived by Luther, but at length they forsook him, not satisfied with the plan of reformation proposed by him.

"The most pernicious faction, of all those that composed this motley multitude, was that which pretendedthat the founders of the new, and perfect Church, were under a divine impulse, and were armed against all opposition by the power of working miracles. It was this detestable faction, that, in the year 1621, began their fanatical work, and excited the most unhappy tumults and commotions in Saxony, and the adjacent countries .-But at length, this feditious croud was routed, and difperfed by the Elector of Saxony. MUNZER, their ringleader, was put to death in an ignominious manner, and his factious counsellors scattered. In this critical situation, they derived much comfort, and affistance from the counfels, and zeal of MENNO SIMON, a native of Friefland, who had formerly been a Popish Priest, and, as he himself confesses, a notorious prosligate. This man went over to the Anabaptists-he was a man of genius. though not of a very found judgment. By his prudence, probity.

probity, meekness, and eloquence, he was rendered very fuccessful. He drew up a plan of doctrine and discipline of a much more mild, and moderate nature, than that of the furious, and fanatical Anabaptists, which had been a curse to every nation where they were found, and a disgrace to human nature."

Hence I observe, that although the affertion of the Author of that Pamphlet, was not strictly correct, "that Menno was the first person that denied Infant Baptism," yet it is a stubborn fact, that although there were individuals, for several preceding years, such as Peter De Bruis, Arnold, and some others, who denied Infant Baptism, yet, until Menno arose, there were no regular and stated societies of Anabaptists, sexcept those impious and fanatical sects, from whom no persons in the present day, would wish to trace their descent) "Hence (says Mosheim) he is deservedly looked upon as the common chief of almost all the Anabaptists, and the parent of the sect, that still subsists under that denomination."

By the allusion made to the conduct of the Anabaptists in Germany, I hope it will not be considered, as implying any reflection on their descendants, of the present day, as if they were actuated by the same spirit, and their principles were tending to produce the same excesses; I mean no such thing. I freely acknowledge, that many of the Baptist persuasion, are ornaments to religion.—

Their piety and learning demand the affection and reverence of the age. Neither should I have recalled to memory those transactions, which disgraced religion, had

not Mr. B. rendered it necessary, by his tracing the subject up to its origin, in the large quotation which he has made from Du Pin.

Here, then, we cheerfully leave it with the Reader of reflection, and impartiality, to determine, on which fide the weight of evidence preponderates.

I now proceed to the second part of my design.

Secondly—to confider the MODE in which Baptism may be administered, agreeably to the word of God, and the practice of the Church of Christ.

This part of the subject, has been so frequently difcuffed, and is thereby involved in fo much perplexity, that the generality of readers, are scarcely able to perceive the real subject of dispute, between the Pædobaptists, and the Anti-pædobaptists. I shall therefore endeavour, to be as concife, and explicit as possible.-"We believe Baptism to be a Christian ordinance, which implies a ceremonial PURIFICATION BY WATER .-The proximate genus, is purification, the specific difference is, that it is a purification by a ceremonial or religious use of water." And I most cordially agree with Dr. Williams, when he fays, "I maintain, that the proper facramental import of the word Barliouss, in the New Testament, is exhausted by this definition." Hereby it will be eafily perceived, that all which we plead for is, the religious use of water, in the Christian ordinance of Bapti/m. We contend, that the MODE of administering this ordinance, whether by fprinkling, pouring, or dipping, is a circumstance only, and does not enter into the

effence, or affect the defign of our Lord in the inflitution of Baptism. We do not deny that the original word has been frequently used, by profane Authors, to denote washing by dipping. All we contend for is, that the word does not signify to dip ONLY, by a total immersion; and we affirm, that the facrament of Baptism is as valid, and scriptural, when administered by sprinkling, or pouring water upon the subject, as by plunging the body wholly under water.

On the other hand, our Opponents contend, that the original term fignifies to dip, and THAT ONLY; and confequently, that cannot be fcriptural Baptism, which does not immerse the subject totally under water. "If the Anabaptists (says an acute Writer*) were content with maintaining their particular mode, only as the savourite badge of their party, without insisting on it, as the effence of the sacrament, our controversy would be instantaneously at an end." But as so much importance is attached to this distinguishing mode, it becomes us to make our appeal.

1st. Therefore, let us examine the true meaning of the original terms. The word used by our Lord, when he gave the commission to the Disciples, after his resurrection, is βαπλίζω. This is a diminutive derived from βαπλίω. And Lexicographers agree in saying, that the primitive idea of this word is to WASH. This is done, sometimes by dipping, sometimes by pouring water, and sometimes by sprinkling. "And here it is observable, that of the two-and-twenty instances where this word found, not one is inconsistent with its being, in its primary meaning,

a generic term, fignifying to TINGE; whereas in fix inflances at least, if I am not much mistaken, the specific notion of immersion is excluded."*

Let us fee in what fense the facred Writers of the New Testament use the word Bandw. "Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger."+ "And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood." In each of these places the word Bandw is used; and it is evident, that in neither place is it used for total immersion; and certainly all must acknowledge, that when applied to the vesture of Jesus, it must convey the idea of sprinkled or stained. Let it be remembered, that this word is never used with respect to the ordinance of Baptism! The word βαπλίζω is used by Christ in his commission, and by the Apostles, when they fpeak of Baptism. And in the words of that learned Critic Dr. Owen, t we affert, "that no one instance can be given in scripture, wherein βαπλίζω doth necessarily fignify either to dip or plunge. It doth NOT fignify, PROPERLY to dip or plunge, for that in Greek is EuGarla and εμβαπλίζω. It no where fignifies to dip, but as a MODE of, and in order to washing. I must say, and will make it good, that no honest man, who understands the Greek tongue, can deny the word to fignify to wash, as well as to dip."

If we consult the learned Commentators of Antiquity, we shall find them all agreeing, that the primary signification of the term is washing. Now it is clear, that this act of washing, may be performed, either by dipping, by sprinkling, or by pouring water, and each of these must

^{*} Dr. Williams, Vol. II. p. 54. † Luke xvi, 24. | Rev. xix. 13. | Collect. of Tracts, p. 581.

be confidered as a fecondary idea attached to the word. So that that man would act as abfurdly who confined the meaning of the word baptize, or wash, to the act of sprinkling or pouring, as another who confined it to dipping; for the term baptize unquestionably is equivocal, and is used for washing, fometimes in one sense, at other times in another. This statement of the case will account for the apparent disagreement on this subject, between Authors equally learned: And this disagreement, is not fo much in the Authors themselves, as in the Writers, who quote them. For when the Advocates for immersion, refer to an Author, it is too common with them to take one fense only, such as serves their own purpose. In this manner, has Mr. B. quoted CALVIN and BEZA. + "The renowned Calvin testifies: The word baptize signifies to immerse; and the rite of immersion was used by the ancient Church." But does this venerable and learned Father fay nothing more? Yes; but Mr. B's reason for going no further in the quotation, is evident. The FIRST PART of that fentence, which Mr. B. has quoted, runs thus, "But whether the person baptized be wholly plung'd, and that, once or thrice, or whether he be only sprinkled with water poured upon him, is OF VERY LITTLE IMPORTANCE, but in this, Churches ought to be left at liberty to act, according to the difference of countries."*

Thus, this great man, when permitted to fpeak for himfelf, fays no more, than what many intelligent Pædo-baptists will readily fay; and would Mr. B. cordially acquiesce in this sentiment of Calvin, "that the mode of

[‡] Page 18. * Calvin's Instit. Lib. XV. Sect. 19.

applying water in Paptism, is of VERY LITTLE IM-PORTANCE," our controversy would immediately cease.

Again, Mr. B. introduces BEZA, as faying, "Chrift commanded us to be baptized; by which words it is certain, immersion is signified." But this learned Commentator. also says, + "The reality of Baptism is the sprinkling of the blood of Fesus Christ for the remission of sins, and the imputation of his righteousness, which are as it were displayed before our eyes in the sign of outward sprinkling. ARE THEY THEREFORE IMPROPERLY BAPTIZED, WHO ARE SPRINKLED WITH WATER ONLY CAST ON THEM? No." This fame Author is quoted by Leigh, in his Critica Sacra, (in Marg.) as expressing himself thus, on Mark vii. 4. "Except they wash Berlicania, i. e. are baptized. Loti fuerint vulg. baptizentur, i. e. they washed, or made their hands wet, by pouring water upon them," as is the custom of the Jews to this day. Thus the cause of immersion is not much affisted by either of these great men, when their testimony is fairly stated.

The opinion also of Dr. Featly,* may be adduced as of considerable consequence. He says, "Christ no where requires dipping, but only baptizing; which word imports no more than ablution or washing, which may be done without dipping, as Hesychius, Stephanus, Scapula, and Dudæus, the great masters of the Greek tongue, make good by very many instances, and allegations out of classic writers."

Having mentioned that eminent facred critic Leigh, it may be deemed strange, if I bring not forward his testi-

⁺ Annotat, Matt. iii. 11. * Leigh's Crit. Sac. in Loc.

mony. On the word $\beta \alpha \pi h \zeta \omega$, he fays, "The word baptize, though it be derived from $\beta \alpha \pi h \omega$ tingo, to dip or plunge into the water; and fignifieth primarily, such a kind of washing, as is used in Bucks, where linen is plunged and dipt; yet it is taken more largely, for any kind of washing, rinsing, or cleansing, even where there is no dipping at all: as, "he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost;" and many other places. This is all that we contend for, that the word baptize does not necessarily mean dipping, to the exclusion of any other mode of washing, by the application of water, either by sprinkling or pouring.

These are the opinions of the learned on the primary meaning of the word: and many more might have been brought forward. But, my Opponent ventures to place his opinion, in opposition to the decision of all the learned, of ancient and modern times; and, with a masterly stroke, closes at once, all possibility of any further dispute; for he says,* "Dipping is commanded in all those places in the New Testament, where Baptism is enjoin'd!!!"

Thus all the learned labour of ages, is fwept away with one stroke, "Baptism 18 dipping!" But notwithstanding this point is so authoritatively decided by Mr. B. I shall presume in the next place,

and—To examine the propriety of confining the word Baptism, to the act of d pping, in those places where it is used in facred scriptures. Here I perfectly agree in the opinion of a late Writer,† "that the point

§ Matt. iii. 11. and chap. xx. 22. * Page 18 + Elliott's dipping, not baptizing, chap. 2. in dispute entirely hinges on this—In what sense the SCRIPTURE uses this word: whether to dip a person in, or under water, or to wash him with water: Is it not then impertinent for any one still to urge, in Homer, Plutarch, &c. it signifies to dip or plunge; FOR WHO DENIES IT? The point in dispute hinges on this; has it always that sense and no other? for else it proves nothing against us; especially if this be not its constant meaning throughout the scripture. But the inspired Writers of the Old and New Testaments, do no where, in my opinion, intend by the word baptize, to express merely, or chiefly, an act of immersion or dipping, and much less to dip under water; but rather that of washing or sprinkling."

I shall now, endeavour to collect those passages in the New Testament, wherein the word Baptism is mentioned, and shall examine whether in all, or in any of them, it must NECESSARILY mean dipping and plunging, to the entire exclusion of sprinkling or pouring.

Matthew iii. 11. I indeed baptize, i. e. dip you with water, but he that cometh after me shall baptize (dip) you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The manner in which the Disciples were baptized by the Holy Ghost, was by the facred emblem hanging over, and resting on their heads in the shape of cloven tongues. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." Chap. xx. 22. Jesus said, are ye able to be baptized (dipped) with the baptism (dipping) that I am baptized (dipped) with?

Mark vii. 4. And when they come from the market, except they wash, (Banh Janh and baptize) or agreeably to our Opponent's mode of rendering the word, except they dip or plunge themselves; "and many other things there be, which they have received to hold, such as the washings (dippings) of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables," (or more properly) beds. It is absurd to suppose that the Jews plunged themselves under water, before every meal, or dipped their vessels and their beds. It is well known, that these rites were observed, with a view of purifying themselves from ceremonial pollution. And Moses informs us, in what manner these purifications were performed; "and he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed, &c."*

In this manner also, was the blood of the lamb to be applied to the doors of the houses of the Israelites, by sprinkling it on the lintels, and two side posts. In allusion to this act, the Apostle calls the blood of Christ, the blood of SPRINKLING. ‡

Luke vii. 29. And all the people that heard him and the Publicans justified God, being baptized (dipped) with the baptism (dipping) of John.

Acts xiii. 24. When John had first preached before his coming, the baptism (dipping) of repentance.

Chap. xvi. v. 33. And he (the Jailor) took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. On this passage, I shall beg leave to present the Reader with the opinion of the judicious Dr. Guyse.† "It seems highly improbable,

^{*} Levit, xiv. 7. ‡ Heb. xi. 28. compared with Exod. xii. 22.

⁺ Guyfe's Paraph. in Loc. note.

that the Jailor, and his house, were baptized by immerfion; fince, as far as appears, that ordinance was, all on
a sudden, administered to them, severally, while they
were in prison; and since the mangled condition of Paul
and Silas's bodies, by means of their being severely
scourged the day before, made it very improper, not to
say unsafe, for them to go at midnight into the water so
deep, as that mode of baptizing would oblige them to
do."*

Revelation xix. 13. "And he was clothed with a vefture dipt in blood"—the original word is $\beta \in \mathcal{C}_{\alpha\mu\mu\nu\nu\nu}$, baptized: now, in order to judge of the true meaning of this word, it may be of use to compare this expression with another, in the Old Testament. In Daniel v. 21, we find the same word used by the Septuagint, in describing the state of Nebuchadnezar's body: his body was wet, $\epsilon \in \alpha \neq n$, baptized with the dew of heaven: and it is left to every one to judge, in what manner a person is baptized with rain or dew descending upon him; whether he is sprinkled or plunged?—once more—

I Corinthians x. 12. "Our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." Now the inspired Author of Exodus informs us, how this was effected: "And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground, and the waters were a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left." Here again, is another instance, in which persons are said to be baptized, and yet not plunged under water.—The Egyptians only were thus baptized!

^{*} Guyle's Paraph. in Loc. note.

But our Baptist brethren, driven from this ground; presently make their stand on another, which I conceive to be equally untenable. They tell us, that in many parts of scripture, such a mode of expression is used, as must necessarily imply immersion—These are the following:

Matt. iii. 6. "And were baptized of him in Jordan:" and v. 16. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway, OUT OF THE WATER:" Hence they draw a certain conclusion, that the subjects were actually plunged under water. But we do not perceive, any thing in these words, to weaken our opinion; for would it be any great inconvenience for them to go into the water ancle deep, with their fandals, for the sake of being sprinkled? The whole force of this argument arises from the words IN and OUT OF; but it is well known that the Grecians use the prepositions sis, and six, in a different sense: sis often is translated apud, coram, ad, to, at, by, near, and upon; and six signifies from and at; as the following passages of scripture abundantly prove.

The example of the EUNUCH is pleaded as an incontestible proof of immersion: "And they went down BOTH INTO the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him, and when they were come up OUT OF the water," &c.* But, if this passage of scripture proves any thing in favour of immersion, it most unfortunately for our Baptist friends, proves too much, as for instance: they went down BOTH INTO the water, i. e. (according to the interpretation of the advocates for dipping) they were plunged under water. Why then it is

equally certain, that PHILIP, AS WELL AS THE EUNUCH, was plunged! And the infpired Historian expresses himself particularly strong on this point, as though he designed to inform us, that neither the one, nor the other were dipped, for he says, they went down BOTH into the water, BOTH PHILIP AND THE EUNUCH.

Therefore, if our Opponents infift, that the Eunuch was actually IMMERSED, we also insist, (and that upon the fame ground)that PHILIP ALSO WAS IMMERSED!! This is one instance out of many, which might be adduced, to expose the absurdity of building so much, on the bare construction of a sentence, and the use of a prepoposition. The expressions and Ess lo voluge, and Ex lov volalos, do not neceffarily imply, that either Philip or the Eunuch went under the water, for the same preposition is used in Matthew v. 1. "And Jesus went up INTO a mountain to pray," ELS To 050s. Did Jesus enter into the BOWELS of a mountain to pray? Chap, xv. 24. "I am not fent but UNTO (815) the loft sheep of the house of Israel." Chapter xvii. 27, " Jesus said unto Peter go thou εις την θαλασσαν To the sea, and cast an hook." Now, if dipping be urged, from the bare meaning of fuch prepositions IN and UNTO, then Peter must have plunged himself into the fea to catch the fish. Again, John xi. 32. "When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down AT HIS FEET, ELS TOUS TOORS.

The absurdity will appear still more glaring, by an attention to the mode of expression used by our Lord to the young man who was born blind,† "Go wash in the pool of Siloam, εις Ίπο κολυμεσθέρων. "To infer therefore,

always a plunging of the whole body, in water, because the word in (or is) occurs in the narrative, would in many instances, be equally as false, as absurd. For instance, our Lord commands the young man born blind, to wash in the pool of Siloam: but that his whole body was not immersed in it is plain; because only his eyes were assected, and only this part was to have been washed, in doing which there was no immersion at all."

Another passage is strongly urged by the advocates for immersion, as unanswerable, which is John iii, 23.-"And John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there." On this we obferve, That at the time of John's appearing, there was a general expectation of the promised Messiah, among the Jews. And when he began to preach, in a public manner, these hopes were raised to the highest pitch, for "the Jews fent Priests and Levites, from Jerusalem, to ask him, who art thou?"* This expectation brought vast multitudes to hear him; they were convinced of the truth of his doctrine, and were baptized. Now John was the harbinger of Jesus the Messiah, and his baptism was a general purification of the Jews, as a prelude to the coming of Christ: and it is observable, that it is said, verse 25th, "Then there arose a question, between some of John's Disciples and the Jews, about purifying."-And as John was a Jewish priest, he must have been accustomed to the manner of performing those various purifications, which were appointed, to remove ceremonial pollutions, by dipping a bunch of hyffop in water, and /prinkling the unclean person. † Is it not therefore + Mr. De Courcy Rej. 232. * Chap. i. 19, 28. ‡ Numb. xix. 18.

highly

highly probable that he arranged the multitudes, on the banks of the river, and that he baptized them, by fprinkling the water over them, either with a bunch of hyffop, or any other convenient inflrument; than that he fubmitted to the Herculean labour of plunging so many thousands, as came to him, from day to day, and from month to month? John had never been accustomed to plungings, under the Mosaic œconomy, and he would not have adopted that mode, without a positive command. But no such command is pretended.

Let us observe again, that as such multitudes came from all parts to hear John, many must have been far from home, and many had cattle with them; this circumstance alone would induce John to chuse Enon, because much water would be necessary for the accommodation of his hearers. Besides, our learned Opponents well know, that the original expression, literally is, many waters, or small streams, consequently nothing certain can be gathered hence in favour of dipping.

It is reasonable to suppose, that a very large majority of those, were led by curiosity to hear this extraordinary person. When they lest their habitations, they had no intention of being baptized; and consequently were not provided with the necessary change of raiment. Indeed, were they thus provided, I know not what conveniency this wilderness could have afforded for undressing, and dressing themselves, consistent with decency. Now, if the Disciples of John were absolutely plunged under water, it must have been either clothed or naked; the former would be unsafe, the latter an outrage on modesty: let the advocates for dipping take which alternative they please.

Romans

Romans vi. 3, 4, 5. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death," &c. The learned and judicious expositor, Dr. Owen, affirms, "that there is not one word, nor one expression, that mentions any resemblance, between dipping under water, and the death and burial of Christ; nor one word that mentions a resemblance between our rifing out of the water, and the refurrection of Christ. Our being buried with him in baptism into death, v. 4, is our being planted together in the likenels of his death. v. 5. Our being planted together in the likeness of his death, is not our being dipped under water, (if it were, then many ungodly persons have been, and are daily) but the crucifying the old man, v. 6. our being raifed up with Christ from the dead, is not our rising from under the water, but our walking in newness of life, v. 4. by virtue of the refurrection of Christ."

An eminent Writer of the prefent day, remarks, that it is observable, that the Apostle, through the whole passage, does not so much as mention, our being baptized into Christ's burial, nor into his resurrection, but, he says, again, and again, baptized into his death. No mode of baptism, then can, with certainty, be inferred from these words, for he mentions our having been buried and raised with Christ, only as the effect, or in consequence of our being dead with Christ, by being baptized into his death; therefore the Apostle only insers, that we are buried with Christ—How? by being baptized into his burial? no—but by being baptized into his death; and I humbly conceive, that the Apostle would have said, not his death, but his burial, if he had intended to describe

§ Tracts, p. 582. * Dr. Williams, vol. II. p. 125.

Baptism as a resemblance of Christ's burial in the mode of it, but he seems carefully to avoid it."

And all must acknowledge, that the burial of Christ, his being put into the tomb, is a more expressive emblem of immersion, than his death on the cross of Calvary.

A thought has occurred to me on this subject, which, I conceive, is far from being unnatural. As the body of Christ was sprinkled, and slained by the blood issuing from his wounded temples, his hands, his side, and feet, so the administration of the ordinance of Baptism by sprinkling or pouring, exhibits a far more lively and striking resemblance of the death of Christ, than plunging. Therefore, I am sirmly of opinion, that if the inspired Writer intended an allusion to the mode of Baptism, (which I confess is very doubtful) by the expression planted together in the likeness of his death, in the passage under consideration, it is natural to suppose he alludes to that of sprinkling.

Thus, I hope, it is established, in the view of the impartial Reader, that the facred Writers of the New Testament, have not positively decided, that Baptism is to be administered by immersion, and by that mode alone, and that we may rationally conclude, from their testimony, that it might be administered by sprinkling. And the public are now left to judge, whether Mr. B's affertion, amounts to any thing more, or less than an unwarrantable, and an unsupported assumption, DIPPING IS COMMANDED IN ALL THOSE PLACES, WHERE BAPTISM IS ENJOINED! Nay were we to reason on Mr. B's favourite maxim, we should say—The scrip-

TURE DOES NOT MENTION PLUNGING, THEREFORE IT FORBIDS IT!!

The Author of the small Pamphlet so frequently alluded to, proposed the following question, to the advocates of immersion, "Does the quantity of the elements used in an ordinance enter effentially into the nature, and efficacy of that ordinance? If it do, why do not advocates for much water, use also much bread and wine, seeing there is as positive a command for the one as the other?

To this Mr. B. replies* "I have no objection to fay, that the quantity of the elements used in an ordinance, enters effentially into the nature of that ordinance."-Surely! It would have been then, peculiarly kind, to have infomed the religious world, more particularly, of this important circumstance; otherwise we shall be in continual danger of erring, by using, either too much, or too little, and thereby rendering our fervices of no avail, nay far worse, -ot rendering them-acts of will worship; and confequently abominable in the fight of God. But on reading farther, we find that Mr. B. has given us information, he tells us that it is "A SUFFICIENT QUAN-TITY!" Important discovery! Benevolent information! But alas! fuch is the perverfenels of the enquiring Pædobaptist, he retorts the question. "What do you call a sufficient quantity?" "I have hitherto taken it for granted, that a few drops sprinkled, or poured, upon the subject, were sufficient." And so they are, for a sufficiency is a sufficiency!! Is not this arguing in a circle? But Mr. B. informs us that there must be a sufficient quantity of water to COVER the body, in order to constitute scripture baptifm; but WHO told Mr. B. this? WHERE has Christ ENJOINED IMMERSION? "A sufficient quantity is all that we plead for," says Mr. B. And who pleads for more? But we think a much smaller quantity is sufficient. Mr. B. thinks otherwise—Who then is to be the judge?

In order to support this strange mode of reasoning, Mr. B. fays, "For instance, at the Lord's supper, our Lord Jesus, has commanded his Disciples to drink wine in remembrance of him. But should any administrator infift that there should be wine sufficient, only to wet the lips of the communicants, and think this application of the elements, answered all the purposes of the institution; we should object; I presume my Opponent himfelf would remonstrate"-Most assuredly he would-and his remonstrance, I think, would be founded on a rational ground. The positive command of our Lord is to eat and drink; and therefore if the receiver, do no more than touch or wet his lips, with the bread and wine, certainly he does not comply with the literal, and express command—to eat and drink.—But this cannot apply to the command to baptize—for our Lord Jesus commands nothing more, than an application of water to the body. He does not fay-Go and plunge all nations under water. Here neither the mode of administering, nor the quantity is commanded, or even mentioned.

This is little better than ferious trifling. It may have the appearance of plaufibility, but no man of common fense, will confider it as solid reasoning.

I shall close this branch of the subject with a few reflections.

gd. On the inexpediency of administering the ordi-

nance of Baptism by dipping or plunging. It is unnecessary. The effence of religion does not consist in the most strict observance of forms and ceremonies. The acceptance of our prayers depends not on the posture of the body, or the form of words; nor the validity of the Lord's supper, on our receiving it, either standing, sitting, or kneeling. It would therefore be unnecessary to lay so much stress on things merely circumstantial, and indifferent, as to say that those who comply not with them, cannot receive it acceptably, or pray acceptably.

Thus we argue in the present case: Our Lord Jesus has commanded us to be baptized, but not to be dipped; therefore it is needless to contend for the quantity of water, and the mode of administration. "To urge it as necessary (says Dr. Owen) overthrows the nature of a facrament, by making the validity of Baptism, depend, not on the the thing fignified, but on the mere fign."-Hence it follows that it is uncharitable to condemn and reproach, that Baptism, which is administered by sprinkling, or pouring. The censure of the pious and honest John Bunyan, is truly applicable to the Baptists of the present day: and as he was of that persuasion he will not. be chargeable with partiality in this case. "In my simple opinion, your rigid and CHURCH DISQUIETING principles, are not fit for any age and state of the Church. I fay they are babes and carnal, that attempt to break the peace and communion of Churches, though upon no better pretences than WATER."*

. It is indecent. It is an indisputable fact, that it was the practice of the ancient Anabaptists, to baptize all persons

^{*} Bunyan's Works, Vol. I. page 151, 153.

naked! as Mr. Henry afferts. And Dr. Williams quotes the learned Mr. Bingham as faying, "After he had produced paffages from Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Leno Veronensis and Athanasius: all which are manifest proofs, that persons were baptized naked, either in imitation of Adam in Paradise, or our Saviour upon the cross, or to signify their putting off, the body of sin, and the old man with his deeds. And this practice was then so general, that we find no exception made, either with respect to the tenderness of infants, or the bashfulness of the semale sex, save only where the case of sickness, or disability made it necessary to vary from the usual custom." Mr. Baxter also charged this on Mr. Tombes, as being the practice of the Anabaptists, which charge Mr. Tombes could not repel.

We readily confess, that the method adopted by the Anabaptists of the present day, approaches much nearer to the rules of modesty. And, yet, at times, such scenes are exhibited as awaken the sensibility of many, and tinge the cheek of semale modesty with a blush. "As to baptizing women, in the face of a sull congregation, after all that has been done to preserve decency, is too indelicate a mode to be observed, in the present day, unless it were absolutely and specifically enjoined, which cannot be proved. For women in loose dresses, to be taken into the arms of men, and plunged into the water struggling, before hundreds of spectators, it is so abhorrent to modesty, that no one can credit such things without far better proof, than was ever brought to countenance them. To

§ Dr. Williams, Vol. III. p. 173, and Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Churches, Book II. Chap. xi. S. x₃ 2.

K 2 behold

behold men and women, when about to be plunged, stand on the brink of the Baptisteries; to see the weaker sex, ready to faint for fear, and to hear them scream, when plunged into the water, has more of confusion and dismay in it, than is consistent with the solemn services of a Christian ordinance."† However, we hope that we may venture to say this without offence, that if our brethren, will still adhere to this mode of dipping, the least they can do, to preserve a due decorum, would be, to provide FEMALE DIPPERS, and take care, that none but women were present, on this occasion.

It is Pharifaical. It was the grand fault of the Jews, that they paid more regard to the externals of religion, than to the essence. This charge I would by no means attempt to fix on my Baptist brethren in this age-far from it. I again declare that I admire the stirling piety, and revere the exemplary conduct of multitudes of that persuasion. But I appeal to every unprejudiced mind, whether it has not fomewhat of this appearance, when we hear persons contending so vehemently, for the absolute necessity of dipping to constitute the nature of Baptism. When we find them, so unreasonably, attached to that mode, and to the quantity of the element, as to refuse to hold communion with their fellow Christians, however useful, or eminently pious, and solely because they have not been plunged! and when we behold them so unremittingly employed in making Profelytes from other Churches: we cannot refrain from faying-"Brethren, we perceive that in these things, ye are too superstitious."

Nothing has a stronger tendency to cherish carnal con-

fidence than making the mere ceremonial parts of gospel worship, of so much importance. And verily, as it is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision that constitutes a real Christian; so it is neither sprinkling, nor plunging, that constitutes the essence of the ordinance of Christian Baptism.

Mr. B. fays, "This fentiment, (viz. that infants of believing parents are in covenant with God, and therefore, have a right to Baptism as the seal of that covenant) is highly calculated to engender, and cherish that carnal confidence and pride fo awfully apparent in the Jewish nation." But we ask every reader of reflection, which fentiment is most consistent with the freeness of the gospel covenant, that which maintains that children are admitted into the visible Church of Christ, by the unmerited mercy of God, without, and before their being capable of performing any condition whatever: or that fentiment which demands the condition of faith, repentance, and submission to a severe act of mortification, before the subject can be admitted? Our adversaries must acknowledge, that many whom they baptize by immersion, are not true believers, confequently fuch are admitted, only into the visible Church of Christ; and are therefore in much greater danger of cherishing carnal confidence and pride, than those who have been baptized in infancy.

We also appeal to the impartial Christian world, whether the mode of baptizing adults by plunging them under water, be not *more* highly calculated to engender spiritual pride, than devoting infants to God, by sprinkling or pouring water upon them?

When we see a person standing on the brink of the Baptistery

Baptistery, in an attitude of confidence; when we hear him express his resolution to follow Christ, and submit to this act of self denial, in honour of his Master, and proclaiming aloud to a crowded assembly.

"I am not ashamed to own my Lord,

Or to defend his cause."

It strikes the serious, and humble mind with disgust, as favouring too much of spiritual pride, and self considence.

On the review of this subject, the following PRACTICAL INFERENCES, claim the attention of the serious Reader,

1st. Adore the condescension of IMMANUEL!

In the PERSON of Jesus, divinity and humanity were united. God was manifest in the sless.! In the CHARACTER of Jesus, infinite dignity, and matchless compassion are sweetly blended.

At one time, we behold the LORD OF LIFE, standing over the tomb of his beloved friend, and calling with a voice that awakened the dead, Lazarus come forth! At another, we behold the sympathetic friend recalling the departed spirit of the daughter of Jairus, and affectionately presenting their living child to the enraptured parents. At one time we behold the SON OF GOD, standing on the summit of the soaming billows of the mighty deep, and at his command the angry waves are hushed into a calm! At another, we behold him as the SAVIOUR OF SINNERS, classing the helpless infants to his bosom—we hear him pronouncing a blessing upon them, and declaring them the subjects of his kingdom.

Here

Here is a combination of wonders. And in which character the SON OF GOD appears most amiable, it is hard to fay.

Let every heart feel the warmest affection for this exalted Redeemer, and adore his condescension in admitting our infant offspring into his visible Church.

The heart, that has ever felt the indescribable glow of parental love, cannot but yield to the irresissible influence of the compassion of Jesus; and constrained by the emotions of gratitude, exclaim—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who, although he is the LORD OF ANGELS, and the KING OF GLORY, has condescended to feed his slock like a SHEPHERD, to gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom."

2nd. It is a duty incumbent on those, who have been devoted to God in INFANCY, to remember their PECULIAR obligations.

You have a more lively incentive to gratitude than others. Great is the honour conferred upon you in being thus early devoted to God. Great is the benefit refulting from the relation, in which you stand to your Creator and Redeemer. While many are ready to ask—"What advantages result from Infant Baptism?" You may reply, "As great, as those which arise from Adult Baptism. It is the highest privilege that infancy is capable of receiving, to be admitted into covenant with the Lord God, and adult baptism does no more."

If you have been baptized in your infancy, you have a ftrong excitement to humility. Having been fo early in-

troduced into the school of Christ, you have every reason to blush, that you have made no greater progress in divine knowledge; that you have made such ungrateful returns to God, for that kindness, which he discovered towards you in the morning of life. The Lord God of your fathers, has condescended to still himself your God, he has nourished and brought you up like children, and yet you have rebelled against him. Let these considerations awaken the most lively contrition.

If you have been baptized in your infancy; you are bound by the strongest and most endearing ties, to love the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus deserves, and claims the love of All intelligent creatures, for his tender mercies are over all his works. But YOU have been baptized in his name, therefore he has a stronger claim on your affection. Reslect on the condescending compassion of IMMANUEL, to you in your helpless days. He has entered into a solemn and gracious covenant with you.—He has promised to pour out his spirit and his blessing upon you. Let these expressions, and designs of mercy warm your hearts, and excite the sacred principle of love to Jesus in your breast.

You are also, bound to adorn that gospel which you proses. You have been devoted to God, in your infant days, therefore those words may be addressed to you with peculiar energy: "Forget not what manner of persons you ought to be, in all holy conversation and godliness." You bear the NAME OF CHRIST: And is not this a greater honour than to bear the name of the most wealthy, the most potent monarch? Should you not then abhor every thing that has a tendency to dishonour that worthy name by which you are called? You

You are bound to discover greater diligence in the service of your divine Master. You are the Disciples of Jesus—his servants—his covenant servants. "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.";

You are bound, by your infant baptism, to cultivate brotherly love. As you are taken into the family of God, admitted into the visible church of Christ: you are laid under the most endearing obligations, to cherish a cordial affection for every branch of that family. And that this connection has taken place, so EARLY in life, in your INFANT days, should operate as an additional incitement to love.

By your infant baptism, you are loudly, and affectionately called to enter into actual covenant with God at the table of the Lord. To renew and confirm that folemn engagement which your parents and friends made on your behalf. You were early in life, numbered among the Descriptes of the Lord Jesus Christ: you are therefore, bound by every confideration of gratitude, affection, and interest to put your names to the covenant, to take upon you those obligations, which rest on every one in actual covenant with God. You are bound to follow the steps of your Master, and yield a chearful, and cordial obedience to all his commandments. Jefus has left his dying request on record: a request addressed to you with peculiar emphasis, whom he has so highly honoured in infancy, "THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME." Go then, and publicly acknowledge your approbation of the

‡ Heb. xii. 1.

conduct of your parents in dedicating you to God, in the ordinance of baptism. Your obligations are many and great. And by what method can you more properly, testify your gratitude? To commemorate the incarnation, the sufferings, and the death of Jesus the Saviour of sinners, is a duty incumbent on all, who have seen their danger, and selt their misery. But you are bound by ties of a more tender, and endearing nature, to "take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

Remember also, my young friends, that if you feel not the force of these obligations; if you obey not the voice of the Lord, which entreats you to enter into covenant with the God of your fathers, and the God of your infancy; then, be affured that your present privileges will aggravate your guilt, and enhance your condemnation. Where God hath given much, his demands will be in due proportion. The condescension of JEHOVAH, has assonished the angelic legions. In your earliest days, you were dedicated to God, as an holy thing. Your parents, your ministers and your friends, frequently, servently, affectionately prayed, and wept over you. Your opening mind has been filled with pious instructions. Your passions received an early check, on the first appearances of irregularity. You have now been many years in the school of Christ, and indulged with rich advantages: advantages, which thousands have not enjoyed!

Now pause a moment and reflect—What is the language of all these mercies, which crowd around you every step, in rich profusion? Do they not unite in addressing you in words like these? "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.

Them that honour me I will honour; and they that despife me, shall be lightly esteemed. I love them that love me: and those that feek me EARLY SHALL FIND ME," But should you stop your ears, and harden your hearts against these reiterated expostulations, this awful consequence will ensue; every mercy-every admonition-every prayer presented to God on your behalfevery tear shed over you-your minister, who has travailed in pain until Christ be formed in your foul-your dearest friends, who, with constant solicitude, watched over your conduct-yes, your tenderly affectionate PA-RENTS whose hearts have often bled over you-all-all will come forward, as swift witnesses against you, if you refuse to hearken to the voice of the LORD YOUR GOD. If you burst the bands of your education—if you give up the reins to the corrupt bias of your heart-if you crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame: as affuredly as there is a just and terrible God, he will avenge the breach of his covenant, "and make your plagues wonderful!" Your condemnation will be aggravated beyond that of millions; beyond the power of language to describe, or imagination to conceive! In you, the tremendous declaration of the Judge of the quick and the dead, will be verified-"Verily I fay unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, THAN FOR YOU!" Let none therefore dare to trifle with their INFANT BAPTISM. It is a folemn engagement: an engagement, which shall be attended with confequences the most ferious and important. The peculiar privileges of your covenant relation, in the early part of life, will either enhance your joys, or add fresh horrors to your everlasting misery! grd. 3rd. It highly becomes CHRISTIAN PARENTS to be mindful of the duties incumbent on them, towards their children. There are duties, which relate to the body, and the temporal concerns of your children. With these I have nothing to do, at present. That fond affection, which glows in the heart, and mingles with every wish, will be irrestifible incentives with you, to take care of the temporal welfare of those dear babes.

But brethren and friends, the grand object of your endeavours,—your tender folicitude, should be THE SALVATION OF THE SOUL! Those dear infants, have fouls

"Which must for ever live In raptures, or in wo!"

IMMORTAL SOULS, which will outlive the ruins of the globe, and the general convultion of nature! These PRECIOUS SOULS ARE COMMITTED TO YOUR CARE! A treasure how valuable! A charge how momentous!

In their early life, your first duty is prayer. Often take your dear little ones in your arms, and carry them to the footstool of mercy, and with that ardent glow of love, which the parental breast alone can experience—with that pathetic emphasis, which parental feelings alone can dictate—fay—

"O thou most indulgent Saviour"—thou hast said, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for such is the kingdom of God." In chearful obedience to thy command, I bring my children unto thee. Dear Jesus, take them into thy arms, and bless them.—They are the creatures of thy power, they have been devoted to thee, and thou hast been pleased to enter into a

covenant with them: O take them under thy special protection, teach and instruct them in the way that they should go, guide them with thine eye, and make them the fubjects of thy pardoning mercy, and faving grace! O Lord teach, and affift me to bring them up as Christians in thy fear. They have been discipled, and baptized: may I be found diligent, and fuccessful in teaching them to observe all things, what soever thou hast commanded me. O what precious promifes are fealed to them! May they have an early, and a faving acquaintance with these promises! May every one of these blessings be actually posfessed, and every obligation, according to their capacities. be discharged by my dear children! Mighty Saviour, I would make my fupplications unto thee, in behalf of every child, thou hast graciously given me, with the faith. and the importunity of the woman of Canaan in behalf of her daughter. Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David, my children labour under the guilt, pollution, dileafe and tyranny of fin and Satan: Lord help me. I cannot doubt of thy power, nor, while thy word, thy oath, thy facred feal stand uncancelled, can I doubt of thy willingness, to fave to the uttermost all that come unto thee. I do not ground my supplications on the worthiness of myself or mine, but on thy free grant of covenant favours. On this my faith would rest. I have therefore admitted thy covenant gift in its full extent; and received both the instrument and the seal of faith. Now Lord. help me to make these my children, acquainted with their privileges and obligations: By thy HOLY SPIRIT blefe my endeavours, and command fuccefs!" §

§ Dr. Williams, with some Variation, Vol. II. p. 340.

The pious parent is encouraged in these his servent addresses to the throne of grace, in behalf of his children, by the nature of the covenant, it is free: not clogged with conditions, above the ability of man to suffil. It is unchangeable: "List up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished." †

You are emboldened also, in your prayers, by the promises of God. "I will be a God to thee, and to thy feed!" "I will pour out my spirit upon thy seep, and my bleffing upon thy OFFSPRING." And an inspired Apostle assures you that, "The promise is, not only unto you, but unto your children." No argument can be more powerful and prevalent than the veracity of God. And none can urge this argument so effectually, as those parents, who have feriously placed their children in a covenant relation to God, in baptism as the seal of that covenant. I fee not now those parents (fays the pious Mr. Henry t) can with equal confidence, pray for their children, WHO DENY THEM TO BE IN COVENANT. AND SO SET THEM UPON EVEN GROUND WITH THE CHILDREN OF INFIDELS! Isaac and Jacob, blessed their children by faith; and that faith respected the covenant which God had made with them, and with their feed." "No prayer for a bleffing is acceptable, but the prayer of faith: no bleffing can be prayed for in faith but what is promised; to have a promise, is to have a

covenant grant; wherefore I can confistently pray for my children in faith, no further than I allow them an interest, in the gospel covenant, that is to fay, that the adminifiration and economy of privileges of mercy appertain to them, and confequently baptism; nor should any thing. be deemed a bar to the enjoyment of them, but an incapability or a criminal rejection. But they neither criminally reject, nor are incapable; consequently, the covenant and its feal terminate and rest upon them, and in warding off any part of what was thus intended for their use, I must be blame-worthy. How can I plead in faith promifed mercy, while I deny to them the token of mercy? It baptism, the token, be not their's, neither is promised mercy their's; and if the latter be not their's, faith has no foundation, in reference to their happiness. Hidden counsels, do not testify or affert any particular truth to me concerning my child. Through grace, I can think, with adoring complacency, of myfelf and mine being, in the hand of a sovereign God; but the sovereignty of God, predestination, eternal covenant interest, particular. redemption, and the distinguishing application of grace, are not the objects of gospel faith, properly and directly. As far indeed as they are testified of in revelation as facts, which are only general, so far, and no farther, faith regards them. While unexplained, and therefore in the class of fecret things, they belong to God; whereas the things which are revealed, and these only, belong to me; and my children. The arcana of the divine government, neither are, nor in the nature of things can be, either the objects of my faith, or the rules of my duty. In short they are not, they cannot be, the foundation of the

prayer of faith. Take away the plea of covenant interest, and faith is struck dumb. Take away covenant promises, and faith is struck blind. Take away covenant faithfulness, and faith has no standing. But blessed be thy name, O Lord my God, my children's covenant interest is tounded on thy testimony, and remains indisputable, therefore I can plead in faith; thy precious promises are directed to each by name, as a covenantee, and therefore I may view in faith thy merciful designs towards them; thy faithfulness was never known to fail, it cannot fail, and therefore the heirs of promise may have strong consolation, faith having two immutable things to stand upon, the promise and the oath of that God who cannot lie. Lord increase my faith! And bless my children with the saving knowledge of this covenant!*

As your children advance in years; as their young minds begin to expand, it will be your duty to teach them the first principles of the oracles of God. Teach them the nature of sin, and the tremendous consequences of the violation of the righteous laws of an holy God. And when their tender minds begin to tremble beneath the terrors of the Lord, open to them, my brethren, open to them the rich treasures of gospel mercy. Take them by the hand and lead them to the stable and the manger of Bethlehem—lead them to the garden of Gethsemane—to the Judgment Hall—to the cross on Calvary: tell them to look on that dear Jesus, and drop the tear of mingled grief and joy. Tell them, that Jesus came to seek and to save such loss sinners as they are. Tell them of the infinite compassion of the great Redeemer, who

^{*} Dr. Williams, p. 322.

affectionately invited little children to his arms, and bleffed them. Tell them that this Jesus is now alive, and lives for evermore; that millions of helpless babes have been redeemed by his precious blood, and that he is willing to clasp them in his arms of mercy, and bless them.

It is your duty to explain to them the nature of golpel ordinances. As they have been baptized in their infancy, you are to explain to them the nature and the design of this sacrament. That the Lord of heaven and earth has condescended to enter into a covenant with man, and that this covenant includes his infant offspring, which covenant has TWO seals annexed to it—BAPTISM and the LORD'S SUPPER. Baptism is a sign or token of the savour of God, and an affurance that he is reconciled to a guilty world. It is a feal which confirms to us, and our children a participation of the promises, and blessings of an external and visible covenant relation to God.

Baptism is a solemn admission into the visible Church of Christ. The Disciples were commanded to admit ALL NATIONS into the school of Christ: to make Disciples of them, and Baptism was the token of their admission. "To disciple all nations, is to christianize all nations.—Not making a person a Christian in foro casi, in the Judgment of Heaven, but declaring him a Christian, in foro ecclesia, in the Judgment of the Church. They are added to the number. Thus, those that were baptized are said to be added to the Church, i. e. added to the number of visible believers. And they are entitled to the privileges of the Church: to those privileges which are common to all visible believers." †

+ Henry on Baptism, p. 26.

Baptism is also, justly stiled a seal of that covenant of mercy, which God condescended to make with parents and their children through the Lord Jesus Christ. This covenant contains a variety of rich blessings: blessings adapted to the wretched state of man, and calculated to render him completely happy. Now Baptism is a seal which confirms this covenant; and is designed to assure us, that he is willing to make good that promise to us, and our children, which he made to Abraham—"I WILL BE A GOD TO THEE, AND TO THY SEED." And as circumcisson was enjoined as a seal of confirmation to that holy Patriarch, so is Baptism now enjoined as a feal of that covenant to every believing parent and his offspring.

This ordinance in the most solemn manner binds us to be the Lord's. Baptism is a free, and entire surrender of ourselves, and our feed to the service of the Lord God. Parents, who present themselves and their children before the Lord, pledge themselves to observe all the statutes and ordinances of God, and to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

After having thus explained the nature and defign of this gospel ordinance, it is your duty to guard their young minds against its abuse. Labour to convince them that the falvation of the soul, does by no means depend on the administration of the element of water, but on the application of the precious blood of Christ, which is strikingly represented by the sprinkling of the water in the ordinance of haptism. "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." §

Endeavour to expose the abfurdity, (not to fay the impiety) of making the MODE of administration and the QUANTITY of the element effential to this Christian ordinance. Baptism is a solemn dedication to God, wherein water is used as a fign or token of spiritual blesfings. It cannot, therefore, enter materially into the nature, and affect the validity of the ordinance, let the elements be used in a larger or a smaller quantity. The religious use of water, is all that is commanded, therefore whether Baptism be administered by DIPPING-POUR-ING or SPRINKLING, it is of no importance. It favours too much of a Pharafaical spirit, to contend so vehemently for MODES and FORMS. It deviates from the freeness, and spirituality of the gospel dispensation, which fays, "The hour is come, when ye shall, neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, worship the Father; but God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." ‡ So, cereris paribus—the hour is come, when ordinances, shall no longer owe their importance to the MANNER in which they are administered, but in the FRAME OF MIND, and the disposition of the heart. This unreasonable attachment to the MODE of Baptism, has a powerful tendency to cherish a legal fpirit, and encourage a carnal confidence.

Especially suffer me, to exhort you, by the sacred name of Jesus, in which your children were baptized—by the honour of religion—and by the concern you feel for the present and suture welfare of those young immortals—by these tender and powerful motives, let me charge you to walk before your family in the sear of God.

‡ John iv. 21.

Live fo as to enable you to fay—"Walk, as ye have us for an example!" Example is far more prevalent than precept. Children are fond of treading in the steps of their parents. Ungodly parents dare not reprove their children, lest they retort—"Physician heal thyself!"—Remember the honourable testimony, which the Lord God bore to the piety of Abraham, and his exemplary conduct in his family. "I know him, that he will command his children, and his houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgement." *.

The impiety of parents hardens the hearts of children, and excites the strongest prejudices in their minds against religion. To this source may be traced, a great part of the iniquity of the rising generation. And, at the last great judgment day, multitudes of those, who will be banished from the presence of God into everlasting punishment, may lay the blood of their souls, at the door, of their ungodly parents!!

Suffer me, therefore, to befeech you who have felt the warm emotions of paternal love, to hear the strong and pathetic words of the Lord: "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou rifest up, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes, and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." †

And the practice of baptizing children will furnish a pious parent with a variety of convincing arguments, while pleading with them, and exhorting them to know, to love and to obey the Lord God of their fathers.—

Taking his child in his arms he may address him in the striking language of a pious Author. *

"My dear child, thou art finful from thy birth, guilty? and polluted. This thy baptism teaches. In baptism, God shews and testifies that he will forgive sins; and thisis one reason why thou hast been baptized, because thou, art a finner, standing in need of spiritual washing. Thou, art not to think that the water of baptism takes away sin. that is, pardons and makes thee pure in thy foul; no, no. it only shews thee plainly that thou wantest this pardon, and purity; and it also shews that God is merciful, and willing to give thee every good thing in this life, and in the world to come, on thy coming to him. He fays in. his word, that he will give grace and glory; that those who feek him early, that is, when young as thou art, shall. find him; and Christ fays he will in no way cast out any poor finner that cometh to him. But thy baptifm shews fill more plainly, that thou art guilty, and that God is merciful-That thou art impure, that is, unfit to go toheaven, but that God is willing, on thy coming to him, to cleanse thee and make thee meet for heaven. My dear child, learn this, and strive to understand it withoutdelay. If thou diest without repentance-how shall I. speak of it?—thou must perish for ever! No one-goes to heaven without pardon, and thou must not expect to go there without repentance. And O remember, that

not only the bible, the fabbaths, the fermons, the prayers, and the advices thou hast had from me and others, will rife up against thee, but also thy baptism, in the day of judgment. O then, my dear child, bring thy poor perishing felt to Jesus Christ. He will not put thee off, for he has declared he will not. He went through every state, from infancy to manhood; and having been a child himfelf, when in the world, he receives children. O the happiness he has to give! He will not only keep thee from hell, but at death take thee to heaven. He alone can make thee truly good; I cannot. No body on earth can. But Jefus Christ, being himself divinely good and gracious, can make us good; yes, he can and will make thee fo, on coming to him with all thy heart. This thou mayest be as sure of as that thou art baptized. For baptism according to the will of Christ is a seal of confirmation. You know, my dear, that, what an honest man confirms by fealing it, he will stand by. Much more so will our gracious Lord and Saviour. Sensible of thy finful and helpless condition, with the affurances of divine grace, and with a contrite heart, pray unto this merciful Redeemer in fome fuch words as these. "O Lord God, who alone canst save me from sin and the wrath to come, accept the prayers and cries of a helpless child.-No one on earth, or in heaven, but thyfelf, O Lord most merciful, can help me. I am destroyed by sin, the sin of my heart especially, but my help is from thee. Accept me in Christ, whose nature and life were perfectly holy. and who is made wifdom, righteousness, fanctification and redemption, to all thy children. O that as I have been baptized with water, I may also be baptized with

the Holy Ghoft, And as this was fanctified and fealed by my baptism, grant it me, O Lord God, for Christ's sake. Amen."

I have now brought my defign to a close. And I take this opportunity to say, that as I, most reluctantly, entered into the controversy, I shall now take my final leave of it: resolved (according to my present views) to take no public notice of any thing that may be written in reply. More important duties demand my attention and my time.

I cannot however, put a period to this work, without declaring that I have not been actuated by a principle of malevolence to any of my Anti-pædobaptist Brethren. I wish ever to maintain such language on this, and on every other religious subject, as may be consistent with that candour, which the gospel inculcates, and humility requires. I love the person, and revere the character of every serious Anti-pædobaptist, and would gladly cherish the most friendly intercourse with him, as a minister, or a private Christian, provided he would observe, in his conduct towards Pædobaptist Churches, that admirable precept of our Lord—"THEREFORE ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE WOULD THAT MEN SHOULD DO TO YOU, DO YE EVEN SO TO THEM!" †

Permit me also to express a hope that nothing which I have said, will be conceived to have arisen from a principle of resentent against my quondam friend Mr. BIRT. I solemnly aver that it has not. Most cheerfully would

I give him the right hand of fellowship. Most sincerely would I wish to live on terms of friendship with him, (while he observes that golden rule of equity enjoined by our Lord) and with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ, during my abode in this world. And it is my servent and unceasing prayer that I may dwell with them in those happy regions, where all the inhabitants are of one heart and one soul—where no jarring sentiment, or discordant passion shall ever interrupt the endearments of an EVERLASTING FRIENDSHIP!

FINIS.





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